Anomaly

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by Spectascopes

Summary

It's W. D. Gaster's job to study any humans that fall underground before their souls are taken. When the day finally comes, he is quite unprepared for the wounded and terrified child that is depositied in his lab.

It becomes quickly apparent that Frisk is not like the six fallen humans before them.

Chapter 1

You had hardly any time to prepare for your first human. As the Royal Scientist, it was your job to gather any information you could about the humans before they were delivered to the King, but you'd only had the job for a couple of years. You ran around the lab, frantically trying to get things ready. Where had you put the DT scanner? How on earth did the file for the last human get put in the same filing cabinet as the Core's energy output calculations? You'd been so busy working on the generator that all thoughts of potential humans seemed insignificant.

You were trying to clear your desk of loose materials when the young Guard member cleared her throat.

“Sir, should I tell the King you need more time?” she asked, just a touch of shyness in her voice. You looked over at her with a pen in your mouth and an armful of papers. She looked barely out of her teen years, but her blue scales were shimmering with health and vitality. Her red hair was pulled up tidily. You had to maneuver things around for a minute before you had your mouth open to speak.

“Ten minutes, you said?”

She nodded. “Yes, sir. They're being transported from Snowdin's forest, where they were caught.”

“Ah, yes, thank you. That should be plenty of time, Ms...?”

“Undyne, sir,” she said with a little bow.

You had to find somewhere to put your Core research that had been gathering dust for the last few weeks, so you motioned your head for the young member of the Guard to follow you. “If you would, Ms. Undyne, could you help me for a moment?”

She blinked and seemed to start after a second in response to your

request. You figured this was her first time on an actual job, even if that job was simply to report to you some information.

“Y-Yes, sir! It would be my honor!” she said as she began to hurry over and take the papers in your arms. She smiled a little at the task, and you caught sight of her sharp teeth.

“Thank you, but please, don't call me sir,” you said as you hurried to the elevator with her in tow. She seemed much more capable of carrying all of the papers than you were. “Dr. Gaster would be much preferred.”

“O-of course, sir- uh, Dr. Gaster!” she chirped as she followed you into the elevator. You pushed your glasses up a little and looked down at the clipboard in your hands. It was quite old, but it detailed the proper procedure for detaining and studying humans. All of the equipment was located below your primary lab.

“Do you know anything else about the capture?” you asked as you rode down a few stories.

“No, s- Doctor, my job was just to come here and give you some time to prepare,” she said. Despite the hurried situation, you smiled at the look of wonder in her eyes at getting what most would consider an 'inside look' at the Undergrounds most technologically advanced facility.

“That's alright,” you said. You looked down at the list of things you needed in disdain. “It's been so long since a human has come, I think the cells are filled with materials we used for the Core. Would you mind helping me drag some of it out?”

“I can do that!” she said. Her nerves seemed to be calming. She was carrying the stack of files, papers, and lap reports like it was nothing.

The elevator dinged and you stepped out into the brightly lit lower lab. “Ah, don't mind the mess down here, it isn't cleaned very often,” you explained as you went down the hall and to the small wing

labeled “Human Testing Facility.”

The first order of business was clearing out one of the specially constructed cells that was created to keep human determination at bay. The walls of the human wing were quite sterile and white, which you didn't like, but you supposed there wasn't anything to be done at that point. You used your magic to unlock the door to the twin cells.

Undyne set the papers on the counter and the two of you worked quickly to get it ready for action. She was much stronger than you were and did the brunt of the heavy lifting, dragging boxes of metal and boards of circuitry out of the one cell and into the other. You got the power up and running and made sure the magic wall of the cell front was fully operational. The last thing you or the King wanted was for a human to escape- not only because of the danger they posed, but if the monsters of the kingdom knew what Asgore was doing to free them... chaos would ensue.

“That's everything, doc,” Undyne reported as she trotted back up to you. You turned from your work to see her wiping her brow with a grin on her face.

“Wonderful, thank you for the help,” you said before you gave her a smile. You looked at your watch and saw that nearly ten minutes had passed. “We should head back up, they're due to arrive soon.”

Undyne nodded, and you admired her determination. The Royal Guard needed people like her who were excited to do whatever they could to help the kingdom. You gave her shoulder a quick pat before you led her back to the elevator and up into the main lab.

When the door dinged and you both stepped out, the main entrance was being opened. You swore to yourself for your own tardiness and hurried over to see the King himself step inside, followed by two canine members of the Royal Guard. You noticed that one was carrying a small figure that you didn't have time to really look at before the King took up your vision.

“Dr. Gaster,” Asgore greeted you. You gave a bow, but he just chuckled and rested one of his enormous paws on your shoulder. “Come now, no need for such formalities, my friend.”

“Your Highness, it's always a pleasure,” you said in return. He smiled, but you saw how tired his eyes were, and his usually well-kempt hair was looking rather in disarray. You looked over to see Undyne bow quickly to him before hurrying over to the other two members of the Guard and sharing a quick word with them. You turned your attention back to the King.

“Has the human caused any trouble?” you asked. The huff he gave was enough of a response.

“They resisted, and force had to be used. Nobody spotted them, but they are unconscious.”

“Ah,” you said, and it was all you could think to say. You had never seen a human, and only knew what you did from reports of other Scientists before you. As Asgore led the Guards to the elevator, you tried to take a look, but the furry arms of the canine hid nearly all of its tiny frame.

It was evident that Asgore knew where he was going. The swish of his deep purple cape was all you saw as you followed behind him, with the Guards flanking you. Undyne was taking up the rear, and you looked back at her for a moment. She caught your eye, but the excitement was gone. She seemed as curious and distressed about the human as you were.

You did very little when it came to actually getting the human in their cell. The Guard placed their form in the center. As they left and the enchanted plexiglass door was sealed once more, you saw the human for the first time.

The first thing you noticed was how small and fragile they looked. They wore a blue and purple striped shirt and shorts that looked quite broken in. Their brown hair covered their face, but they looked

unwashed and underfed. You would have looked longer, except Asgore demanded your attention in the center of the room.

His face looked so very tired and weary. He didn't look at the small creature in the cell, but it also seemed to take all his strength just to hold eye contact with you. He let out a deep sigh.

“Dr. Gaster, all of the research that the previous Royal Scientists have done is located down here. I'm sorry I cannot help further, my friend, I do hope you understand.” Asgore looked off for a moment. “If you find yourself overwhelmed, please let me know, and I will find a suitable assistant for you. Take all the time you need.”

“O-of course, Your Highness,” you said. He would usually protest, but as his eyes found the human again, he looked so very defeated. You really did understand- you'd heard the stories of what had happened to his children and shivered at the idea of it happening to your own.

“It would be best to begin right away,” he said, and that pulled you out of your awful thoughts. “I can look after your boys tonight if you need, friend.”

You smiled at him. “That would be wonderful, Asgore, thank you. Are you sure you don't mind?”

That made him at least give an amused hum. “Not in the least. I always look forward to their visits.”

“Papyrus will be overjoyed. He's been quite sad that none of us have hair ever since you taught him how to braid.”

That put a smile on Asgore's face. Sans and Papyrus both loved Asgore, and you knew that he enjoyed playing with them and spoiling them.

“They are good children,” he mused. One of the Guards coughed, and it made the King blink. “Ah, yes, I'm sorry, we should be going now. It

has been nice to see you, as always," he said as he extended a big paw to you.

You took it and smiled at him. He was a kind King. He didn't deserve the strife that these humans caused him. As the four of them turned to leave, he hesitated in the doorway and looked back.

"Gaster, a warning. Do not allow yourself to get attached to the human," Asgore said. His face was suddenly very serious and sad. "I'm not sure this one can even speak, but... there is no rush. I know this is dirty business, but I wish you the best of luck."

Without another word, the King swept out of the room and you were left alone with the unresponsive human.

Chapter 2

You stayed late in the lab, mostly researching what had been done before you. You'd glossed over the procedure, of course, but that was three years ago when you'd gotten the job. So, now you sat alone underground, sipping at your tea while shuffling through the basics of human research and 'soul extraction' preparation.

Of course, everybody knew that humans were powerful. You knew your own soul would pale in comparison to the tiny frame in the next room over, but you didn't know exactly what made their souls so strong, and neither did any of the other Royal Scientists before you. There were some crude theories and speculations, but nothing to be certain of.

Your tea was piping when you began your reading, but by the time you sat down the last file it was barely lukewarm. Unfortunately, unlike the King, you couldn't just wave your hand and create fire. So, you just sat the mug on the counter and leaned back in the chair.

Your feelings on having to run tests on a living subject were, to be frank, very negative. After all, you'd created your two children with science and manipulation of the soul with the express purpose of them being cared for and loved, and treated as what they were; children. You shuddered to think of your two young sons trapped in a cell like the human was. Judging by its stature and frame, the measurements of humans before indicated that this human was still very young. While none of the procedures seemed particularly cruel, the phrase that was repeated throughout the research was bolded, underlined, and highlighted- do not trust the humans. Do not take pity on the humans.

You'd always dreaded this day, despite knowing it would likely come. You let out a sigh and took your glasses off to wipe them on your lab coat. Creating the Core was what you'd wanted- it made life Underground easier for everybody, it was ethical, there was nothing to question about it. It used lava and ice to create power. Running tests and procedures on a living human child? You closed your eyes for a moment. It was going to take a lot of resolve, but if it was for the good

of monsterkind, you would do it.

Movement on your monitor caught your attention. The little screen displayed the cell that the human was trapped in. You saw it stir and brought the display closer to watch.

As it moved, you noticed that it tried its best not to jostle its left wrist. It lifted itself slowly from the ground, falling back a few times in the process, before it could look around.

You were very glad that you weren't in the room, because it likely would've been scared to death. Instead, it looked around and saw nobody. It rose to its feet and it's knees almost gave out beneath it.

Standing there, alone, you could finally see just how tiny the human was. You were taller than most monsters, standing over six feet, but this human barely scraped four... if that. Its sweater looked three sizes too large, so it was hard to judge its weight, but its legs looked like sticks. Its eyes were hidden by its messy and tangled brown hair.

It didn't look very powerful, you thought.

It fell once as it made its way to the far corner of the cell, and once it made it, its body gave out underneath and it collapsed into a shivering ball. You were already trying to gauge its height and weight. The small thing stayed in the corner.

You got to your feet but left the monitor on your desk. It needed medical attention, and the previous scientists had said that decent health was needed for proper test results.

You entered the room slowly, afraid of startling it, but you already heard muffled sobbing coming from the cell. You wanted to hurry over, but you reminded yourself that this wasn't a monster. You cleared your throat and the sobbing ended with a small choke.

You walked to the clear cell. Three of the walls were made of white

tile, and the one that faced you was made of magic glass that was used to sap the humans of their energy so they couldn't fight back. It was morbid, but you had to admit it made you feel safer.

The cell was well-lit, so you got a clear view of the back of the humans head. It must have curled up when it heard you enter. It was shaking.

The first thing that had to be done was to check for any major health complications. Sick humans were not productive humans. You stood before the glass with your hands behind your back.

“Human, please come here so I can assess you for any major wounds,” you said calmly. The six humans before this one had responded mostly with questions or compliance to this step. This little human, however, only shrunk further into the corner.

“Human, I do not want to use force, but I will if necessary.” You didn't like the sound of your own voice, but you had to be stern. This wasn't your child, you reminded yourself. This was a human. Humans killed monsters.

It choked out a little sob, but it didn't move. You'd hoped this would all go smoothly, but clearly that wasn't going to happen.

“Human. Come here. Now.”

It refused. You opened your mouth to say more, but the sound of its suppressed sobs stopped you from raising your voice. You really weren't prepared for this, but you didn't want to lose your job over it…

“I'm going to stay in here until you comply. Food and water will be provided if you cooperate- if not, I can't guarantee anything.”

Once you'd said it, you went to the desk that sat between the two adjacent cells. You'd brought some of the records with you, and you

began to look through in an attempt to find out the best course of action for this situation.

An hour passed and you regretted not bringing your cold tea. The six humans before had all been complacent. The second human soul had said no at first, but that was only until the food was promised. All of the observations described the humans as “naive and trusting” but that just made it worse.

During the hour you sat, the human continued to cry. It was distracting and it made you feel bad, but eventually you allowed yourself to feel annoyed by it, and that made it a little better. It wasn't like they were going to be in pain- you wanted to help them. You ran a hand over the back of your skull and sighed, weighing your options.

The human was not well. Its wrist was likely twisted or fractured, and it was malnourished. It needed a bath something awful and you needed to take a sample of blood. You could wait for it to obey you out of boredom or starvation, but that didn't seem right to you. The idea of doing anything by force was equally as unpleasant, but something had to be done.

You waited a minute longer. Their sobs were getting quieter, so you stood up and went back to the glass. It was still in the corner, right where you left it.

“It's been an hour,” you said. It flinched but didn't look at you. “This is your last chance to come here. I don't want to do anything that will injure you.”

It was a very slow movement, but they shifted ever so slightly, and you finally saw their face. Their eyes were puffy and red, still obscured by their hair, but they looked utterly terrified. It was like a punch to the gut, but you kept yourself composed.

“I just need to look you over for injuries. Your wrist looks wounded. Like I said, I'll give you something to eat if you just come over for a little while.”

You knew you were starting to give. You let down your big bad scientist voice. The human didn't move for a bit. You thought for only a moment before you bent down on one knee and offered a hand towards the glass.

It took a while. It was slow to move itself from the wall, and even when the human did face you, there was another long minute of just watching. You tried to keep your face blank. It was crying still. When it finally began to scoot forward, you could see the tremors going through its thin frame.

The human made it back to the middle of the room before they stopped. They hid their face from you, electing instead to put their knees to their chest and use their good arm to hold them there. You felt bad- they were shaking like a leaf in a windstorm. They were pale, and still they continued to let out tiny, gasping sobs. You didn't really have the heart to force them to come closer.

“That will do,” you said, and you scolded yourself inwardly for the gentle tone creeping into your voice. You used magic to open a door in the glass and slowly stepped inside.

The human must not have been expecting that, because they sucked in a breath and flinched away from you. They looked up and you could see the fear in their eyes. They wanted to run. The door you'd made had closed behind you, and they were too weak to be a threat, but still. You used your magic to hold them in place, turning their little red soul a deep blue.

The reaction was immediate. As soon as they found that they couldn't move, they opened their mouth like they were going to scream and started struggling with everything they had. No sound escaped them before they shut their mouth again and grit their teeth and thrashed in your grasp in vain. They were too weak to even come close to shaking your hold. Still, choking sobs were coming from their mouth as they writhed to escape you.

You quickly moved over to them, holding up your hands to show you

meant no harm, but it only made the situation worse. They let out a startled cry. They were held upright by your magic, otherwise you knew they'd be squirming on the floor in horrified agony.

You were scared. There was nothing to suggest that a human would act like this- no monster would ever even act like this. It was like they were an animal that knew it was about to be slaughtered. Your resolve weakened and with a wail they broke from your magic and fell heavily on their hurt wrist. They were back in the corner before you could blink, cowering and shivering and violently sobbing.

You held up your hands and got down on one knee, but they were worked up into a frenzy. Small noises escaped them, but they didn't say anything. That made it worse. You had to take deep breaths to calm your pounding heart.

“Easy there, easy,” you said. It was so hard to keep the stern edge to your voice when the small human before you was so distressed. It had stopped writhing, but was still clenching its tiny fists against the wall and pressing itself as far away from you as it could.

It was your turn to move slowly. You got closer to it, inch by inch. It noticed, of course, you could tell by how tense its body was, but it had nowhere to go and nothing to do. Eventually you came within touching distance. You could see the cuts and scrapes on their hands and knees and the dirt covering their messy sweater.

“Calm down, human,” you said slowly. It drew back when it heard your voice so close, but you refrained from any physical contact. “I'll give you a moment to calm down. I'm not going to hurt you.”

A few slow seconds passed. Your heart was pounding, but you stayed composed. If it knew you were scared, it might attack. When the child shifted itself enough to see you, its eyes looked... void. Scared, certainly, but hopeless, too.

You reached out a hand and offered it to them. “It would make this a lot easier for both of us if you cooperated,” you said softly.

It blinked. Without a sound it hesitantly reached out its left wrist, holding it gingerly, and allowed you to move close enough to hold it tenderly in your hand.

You were as gentle as you could be. You knew healing magic, and by extension you could gauge the extent of injuries. The human would whimper when you touched something that looked out of place, and you would draw away.

“The bone is slightly fractured,” you said. You weren't too sure if it even understood you, but it didn't look at your face even if it did. “It should be healed in a weeks time if you allow me to use magic to heal it-”

The human tugged its hand away quickly. You were startled, but when you saw the look on its face you could understand. It looked prepared to receive a blow.

“The magic is relatively painless,” you explained. “Sometimes it can sting, but it will only take a few seconds a day for something of this extent. The mechanic is quite simple, I will give this portion of your body some of my magic, and it will provide energy for the healing process, speeding it up and easing the pain.”

They still looked very much concerned. They looked down at their wrist, up at your offered hand, and then at the floor. They bit their lip.

“I'll be as gentle as I can. It will only hurt a bit,” you said. You were absolutely awful at being a big and commanding figure. You'd do what you had to in order to proceed with the human.

When their wrist was eventually offered again, you got closer and held it in one hand while the other rested on top. The human was shaking again with renewed vigor.

“You'll see a blue magic on my hand for a couple seconds, and then you'll feel a little pinch. If it becomes too much, you may pull away.”

The human didn't respond, but watched your hands like a hawk. As the magic came to you they gasped and began to move, but then seemed to steel themselves and swallow.

They whined a little when the pain hit, but it was over in only a few seconds. You released their hand and watched in curiosity as they pulled it towards them and gingerly flexed the muscles and experimented with it. They glanced up at you and you saw a flash of something like gratitude in them.

You smiled despite yourself. “There. See? It isn't so bad. You'll start to feel fatigued in half an hour or so, because of the expedited rate of healing. I'll bring you something comfortable to sleep on as well as the meal. Before then, I just need to get you cleaned up a little bit.”

The fear and suspicion never left their eyes, but they nodded softly. You wanted to believe it was because you'd earned their trust, but you knew that would be a lie. They had no other options other than to obey you.

You took them by their uninjured hand and led them from the cell. Now that a human was down here, you were the only person aside from the King who could come to the lower lab. It was sealed with magic, and so long as somebody was down with the human, the only way for anybody to enter or to leave was by that person's permission.

The child's hand was warm and small, and their fingers trembled. You had to swallow back a nervous cough, because the weeks ahead were going to be damn near impossible to get through.

You were quite literally raising a pig for slaughter

Chapter 3

The washroom was spacious and had a small bath, as well as a shower and a big soaking tub. It doubled as one for monsters to use, as well as for the humans. There was a small and primitive bathroom that led off of the humans cell, but it had only a toilet and a shallow sink.

The human did not try to move away from you or resist in any way as you led them to the brightly lit room and went about getting some things out of various cabinets. You opened a small closet and found some clothing in a disparity of sizes. You pulled out a white cotton shirt that looked a couple sizes too large and a pair of sweatpants that would be too long, but it was the best you had in the limited selection. The clothes smelled a little of dust, but they were certainly a step up from what the human was wearing.

They stood in the middle of the room like an abused animal. They looked around at the shallow tub and the shower and shook. It was quite cold, and you felt bad for not accommodating them more. Even if they were going to die, they deserved to at least be comfortable. You tried to think of it like a badly wounded animal.

“Here,” you said as you handed them a towel. They took it slowly and looked up at you. “You'll have to get undressed, I'm afraid I can't leave you in here alone.”

The haunting fear in their eyes was enough to make you turn away and walk back to the closet. “I won't watch. The sooner you're clean, the sooner you can eat.”

They were dirty, they needed their hair thoroughly brushed and more than a few rinse and repeats of shampoo, but you settled for a bar of soap, a washcloth, and a hairbrush. It would have been great if more people could help with this, but you knew the King's plans were to be kept under tight wraps at all times. The common people weren't to know about the human souls and killing children, and Asgore wanted nothing to do with it personally.

You heard the child shuffling around behind you, and waited until it was quiet before you turned back around with your supplied in tow.

They had the big towel wrapped around their body like a shawl, covering everything from the knees up except their head. They were quaking in their nonexistent boots, but you weren't sure if it was because they were naked or because it was chilly in the bathroom.

You walked over to the tub that stood in the middle of the room, raised up a few feet. Some monsters were quite partial to baths, especially those that were composed of a more goopy physicality. You were glad that the basin was open. You sat the various things on the rim and turned on the hot water. One good thing about Hotland was that it never took long for the water to heat up.

The child came closer, the sound of their bare feet on the cold stone floor small and quiet. They seemed very hesitant to approach you, and kept themselves tightly wrapped in the towel.

You gave them a small smile before adjusting the temperature of the water. Sometimes, after a hard day of work, you'd use the showers at the labs specifically for how hot the water could get. It was a great way to relieve tension, especially for monsters like you that could easily tolerate high temperatures. But you knew that humans were warm-blooded.

You looked at the human as they watched the water fill up. It was quite morbid to see them and know that in only a month or so they would be killed for their soul. You motioned for them to come closer, because even if the notes said not to take pity on them, it was going to be impossible not to.

“You can come see if it's too warm or too cold,” you said quietly. They were very cautious, but eventually they stepped over to the knobs and inspected them. With their healthy hand they reached out and touched the flow of water. They stood there for a moment, and then withdrew. They didn't say anything. They peeked up at you and gave a quick nod. The basin was full enough.

“Alright, you can get in,” you said. The two steps that led up were close to the faucet, but the human looked at you in fear with its dingy red eyes and then looked back to the floor and shuffled its feet.

“Here,” you said, and turned around. “You can put the towel on the edge, try not to get it too wet.”

You heard them shuffling once more, then there was the sound of lapping water, and you knew they'd gotten into the tub.
You turned and went to say something, but you froze. The human's bare back was facing towards you, half submerged in the clear water. You put a hand over your mouth to stop a little gasp from escaping.

Half-healed marks laced their back, some red and relatively new, others older, scabby, and dry. They were deep and half-healed, clearly never treated properly. They'd been whipped, you knew that, and it filled your stomach with dread. Why? The scars were ridged and would never truly heal. They looked so very out of place on a child's skin.

The human must have noticed your hesitation, because they turned to look over their shoulder and saw you gaping at their back. Their eyes went wide, but you quickly held up your hands to show you weren't going to do anything.

“I'm sorry, human, I... I remembered something that I had to do tonight and got worried for a moment,” you lied through your teeth. You knew they didn't believe a word, but then again, you also knew they hadn't believed anything from the very beginning. You took a step closer and the human turned away again to hunch over in the water and shiver despite the heat.

You, Dr. W.D. Gaster, had no clue what to do. You added some soap to the water so that you could only see the human from the waist up, but the lashing... you had to swallow while you worked. You'd have to contact the King soon. There was no explanation for this.

You only noticed that the human was crying when you heard the drips of water. You went still. They were so thin that you could see the sharp outline of their spine running down their back, ridged with wounds. You couldn't stop yourself from seeing a child being whipped- and you couldn't stop yourself from imagining your own children in this human's place.

“Human...” you began softly. Their shoulders dipped forward as the choked sobs returned and they hugged themselves tightly.

You helped them out of the water with shaking hands. They didn't fight you, or protest. The look in their eyes was numbing. They cried. You helped them into the clean clothes before you led them softly back to the room with their cell.

You sat them down on your own desk chair. Their feet didn't touch the floor, and they refused to look at you. You went to your office and grabbed the throw you used to keep cat hair from the black material and hurried back. The human was where you'd left them. You put it around their shoulders and got down on one knee so you were eye-level with them.
You reached out and put a hand on their shoulder. They flinched. They were too young to know the kind of fear and shame that they did. It hurt your heart.

“Child, I won't hurt you. I promise. My name is Dr. Wing Dings Gaster. Can you talk?”

They sniffled and shook their head tightly. They moved just far enough away so that your hand couldn't touch them anymore, and so you drew it away.

“I... am sorry, for how I behaved earlier. I am the Royal Scientist, and although you are the first human I've seen, when one falls down here it is my duty to... ah. Take care of them,” you said. The human kept their head low and didn't look at you, their wet hair hiding their eyes. You swallowed.

“Six humans have fallen down here before you. I've got all of their records right here, but none of them... gave me any reason to believe that you would act as you have.”

You saw them draw themselves up and move their shoulder a bit closer to their face. For a moment you were confused. Then you realized they were expecting a blow. It took a lot of effort to keep your voice low and calm.

“Oh, child, no... please don't...” you were about to say 'be scared of me' but you realized that they had every right and then some to be absolutely terrified by you. You took a deep breath. “Technically speaking, you're to be kept in that cell at all times unless it's absolutely necessary for you to be out of it,” you said quietly. You moved back and sat on the bench beside the wall. “However... I don't believe you present any threat to me. Rather, you seem to think I have an intent to harm you.”

They relaxed slightly. Very slowly, their head moved, and you caught sight of a dull red eye peeking out from the mess of hair.

You held up your hands, and their eye followed the movements closely. “I promise, child, I have no such intent. To be honest, the thought of running any sort of tests on a living subject such as yourself repulses me, but it is part of the job and I very much needed this job.”

Did they understand you? They watched for a few seconds, only to look away again or rub their hurt wrist.

“However, I need to ask you a couple of questions, and you should try to answer them as best as you can. It will be much easier for both of us, alright? You are a strange child, and I have no explanation for your behavior, or the...” you trailed off as you thought about the horrific sight of the child's back. “The injuries. It's okay that you can't speak. Do you know how to sign?”

They looked at you. Their face was so vulnerable, and their watery red

eyes made your heart hurt. They looked away but held up their hands.

“Little.”

It was choppy and uncertain, but you understood. You nodded thoughtfully.

“Can you write?”

They seemed to curl in on themselves when you asked, like they'd been taught this shame since they were young. They didn't have to shake their head for you to know that they didn't, but the small movement confirmed it anyways.

“That is alright, child. Can you read?”

Another shameful shake of their head. They'd begun shaking again.

You had to pause for a moment to compose yourself. Somebody had done this to them. Somebody had done this to an innocent and frightened child-

A little sob drew you out of your aimless anger and you instinctively moved forward. Humans were very aware of the emotions around them, you'd read. You remembered too late that it wasn't Sans or Papyrus and the human drew away in fear. Your gut twisted painfully and you held up your hands.

“No, child, I'm sorry, I didn't mean to frighten you. I...” you had to steady yourself. You took a deep breath while the child watched you, tears running down their still-dirty cheek.

“I want to help you,” you said finally. You moved a bit closer. “I know that you are very very scared of me, and that's okay. You have been through more than I could ever understand. I...” you trailed off again and looked down. “I have two children of my own, you see, and... the

thought of somebody doing this to a child... no, to anybody, it makes me very upset.” You met their eyes for a moment. It felt like your own feelings were amplified by theirs. A second occurred where you felt a connection with the child.

You stood up, very slowly this time, careful to make sure each of your movements could be seen. They hugged the throw tighter around themselves and quivered as you moved over to grab a few handfuls of papers from the desk.

“I will go and get you something good to eat. Do you want to accompany me?”

They looked at you for a moment before scooting gently to the edge of the chair and easing themselves on to the floor again. They looked at you for a second before they sniffled and wiped their tears away with their hand.

“What's your name?” you asked quietly as you stood before them. You bent down a little so you weren't so intimidating.

It took them a little bit, and some of the letters were barely correct, but they eventually signed it out.

“F R I S K”

“Frisk?” you asked to clarify. They flinched at it being said aloud, but nodded.

“Frisk. That's a lovely name,” you said. You rose to your feet again and the child moved to shrink away, but you watched them visibly steel themselves and only shake in response.

You held out your hand, careful to make no sudden movements. They looked at it for a moment, and then up at you. Their head came a little below your chest. They could have been anywhere between eight and fourteen.

They softly and hesitantly slipped their hand into yours. They had tiny hands comparatively, so you gently curled your long, slender fingers around them and gave a small squeeze.

“Thank you for trusting me, Frisk,” you said gently.

Maybe you imagined it, but it felt like they held your hand a bit tighter.

Chapter 4

Chapter Notes

the baby bones make their appearance

You made it back to the King's Castle very late that night. After the human had eaten and you'd made their cell as comfortable as you could, they'd fallen fast asleep. You wished you could have stayed to make sure they were alright, but you had your own children to think about, and you had to tell the King about Frisk's behavior.

When you got to the Castle, you found Asgore in the throne room, sitting beside his throne with Papyrus practically standing on his shoulders to braid his hair. Sans was sitting nearby, inspecting one of the many flowers in the room. As you came into view, King Asgore was the first to spot you, but your own children weren't far behind.

"Daddy!" Papyrus cried, and you winced as he jumped from Asgore's shoulders and landed heavily, but he scurried over to you and jumped into your arms without hesitation. "Come look at what me and Sans did, braiding is really fun!"

You smiled despite yourself, hugging Papyrus for a moment before the ever-excited child squirmed out of your arms and ran back over to Asgore. Sans was looking up at you with a smile, but he didn't get up from the floor. He looked tired, but that wasn't uncommon.

"Hi, dad," he said happily, but Papyrus was already clambering over Asgore, who only laughed and made sure the active skeleton didn't fall off of his broad shoulders.

"Good evening, sire," you said, but Asgore scoffed.

"None of that, now, my friend," he said, but he frowned when he saw the tired smile on your face. If he had questions, he didn't say so. Papyrus was tugging gently on his ear.

“Papyrus, stop that,” you scolded, and he did, but only in turn to hold up a sloppy braid in the King’s beard.

“Look! Isn’t it good?”

“It’s very good, but you shouldn’t pull on monster’s ears,” you said softly, but Asgore was laughing his deep, rumbly laugh, and Sans had pulled himself to his feet to give your legs a quick hug before he reached up and took one of your hands.

“It’s alright, no harm done,” Asgore said, laying one of his big paws on Papyrus’s head and giving it a little rub. “They were both very well-behaved.”

Papyrus hopped off of Asgore and hugged your legs like his brother. “Yeah, dad! That means we can have spaghetti for dinner tomorrow, right?”

“I suppose,” you said, patting Papyrus’s head.

“Aw, what?” Sans groaned, “I wanted pizza.”

“Pizza! Pizza is gross, brother!” Papyrus exclaimed.

“Boys, do you think you could go and check what time it is?” you asked. Sans gave you a look- he was always so smart- but Papyrus was already pulling him away and out of the throne room.

“Yeah! Come on Sans, I found this cool rock in the courtyard, it looks like a pear!”

“Maybe pears look like the rock,” Sans said, but he was dragged out of the room with only a single backwards, knowing glance at you.

You smiled after them, but soon you remembered poor little Frisk and the smile vanished. Asgore stood and you felt one of his big paws on your shoulder.
“I understand if you are put-off by the human. Did something happen, my friend? You look very tired. If they attacked you-”

“No, no, it… it isn’t anything like that,” you said immediately. “They are extremely unwell, sire. They are not acting like any human that has come before them.”
Asgore paused for a moment. “What do you mean?”

“They are terrified of me. They cannot talk, or write, and their sign language is rough to put it mildly… They are not acting like the previous six.”

Asgore stared off for a moment before he looked back to you with deep-rooted concern in his features.

“What else can you tell me about them?” He asked. “What you’ve described is, indeed, quite peculiar.”

“They…” you trailed off and took a deep breath. “They were abused. Their back is covered in scars- from a whip, I believe. It is… horrible, sire.”

“Whipped?” Asgore asked, and the grip on your shoulder tightened.

“I-I believe… it appears that way,” you said. You took a deep breath before you continued. “I’m sorry, sire, but I don’t know if I will be able to continue the procedures.”

“My friend, I do not blame you,” Asgore said, “but I would like to see the human tomorrow. If what you described is accurate, then we can’t help but change protocol.”

You let out a breath. “Thank you, sire.”

Asgore gave you a good-natured huff, likely at the use of the official name, but then his face fell again in worry.

“Take your boys and go get some rest, Doctor,” Asgore said. “I will come to the lab at noon tomorrow to see the human.”

You nodded and left him with a bittersweet goodbye and a weight on your chest.

Your home was cozy. Some said it wasn’t what they expected the Royal Scientist to live in, but you weren’t just a scientist; you were also a father of two. Well, you’d created your children by artificial means, but they were happy and healthy and the three of you lived in your cozy little home in peace.
Sans was asleep in your arm while Papyrus dutifully walked beside you with his hand in yours. Luckily Sans was the much less energized son but also the smaller, so you could still carry him without it being too much trouble.

You made it home and tucked Sans into bed. He had such little stamina, and that worried you, but with his low HP you could hardly blame him. Papyrus hurried off to his dresser and got changed into his pajamas, because it was very late and even though he still had some energy, he was getting tired.
“Dad,” Papyrus whispered, so as not to wake his brother, “can you read me a story tonight?”

You watched Sans for a moment as he pulled the blankets around himself and mumbled something, but he was sleeping soundly. You smiled at the little skeleton before you stood up and Papyrus took your hand with a hopeful expression.

“Alright, I suppose I can…” you said with a playful smile, and Papyrus grinned.

Papyrus followed you to the kitchen as you made yourself some tea, and upon his insistence you let him put the bag in so it could steep and a little bit of honey when it was done. You watched him as he happily made your drink for you.

They were nine years old, technically speaking, but they were monsters, and so they matured at different and unique rates. You'd created them from yourself, but they were never meant to be anything but your children. You'd never thought of them as tests- even if they were, technically, a test in what human determination could do. You'd been prepared from the moment it had begun to raise two skeleton children. And that's exactly what you were doing, and you were a happy father with a wonderful job, but…

Papyrus stirred the tea, the soft clinking of the spoon against the ceramic mug calming and pleasant. You kept thinking about the human. How the marks on their back weren't all fully healed, but some were already scarred and old. Had they ever had a family? Papyrus presented you with your cup with a happy smile, and you accepted it in turn. Had Frisk ever felt safe?

"Dad?" Papyrus asked quietly from his seat beside you. You blinked and looked down at him. "You look like you're thinking pretty hard."

"Ah, I'm sorry, Papyrus," you said, holding the mug in both of your hands and letting the warmth of it seep into them. "Thank you for making my tea-" you raised it up and took a sip. A little too much honey, but it was so much more delicious because your son had made it for you. "It's perfect."

"Only the best for the best dad," he said, so completely sincere and happy. You put the cup down and patted his head.

"How was your brother today?" you asked him.

"Good! He even played tag with me for a while!"

"That's good, was that fun?"

“Yeah!” Papyrus said, but then he seemed to remember something. “Oh- can we have spaghetti *and* pizza tomorrow night? Sans said he didn’t care but I know he really wants pizza.”

You laughed a little. “Yes, we can get both. They make small pizzas for one person- we can get your brother one of those.”

“Okay!” Papyrus chirped. “I bet a Sans-sized pizza would be really small. And cute!”

“I bet you’re right,” you agreed with a contented smile, but you leaned down and pressed your forehead to his in a little skeleton kiss. “But, it’s getting late, Papyrus. How about we pick out a story and I’ll read for you. We can discuss how cute the pizza will be tomorrow.”

Papyrus giggled as he returned the gesture, clumsily clanking his little forehead to yours. “Yeah! Too bad Sans is sleeping, he likes stories, too. And cute pizza, probably.”

“Tomorrow night I won’t be out so late- I can read one for the both of you,” you said, and that seemed to make Papyrus happy.

He fell asleep about halfway through your story. You watched him for a few minutes, snoring softly and peacefully, then turned and saw Sans sleeping close beside and much the same.

Usually you would go to sleep contented and happy. But you watched them, so safe and warm, and you kept thinking about the poor, frightened human, sleeping alone in your lab. Were they any older than these two? Had they ever done anything to deserve how they’d been treated?

You didn’t sleep much that night.

Chapter 5

Chapter Notes

> I put "Magic Frisk" in the tags, so I hope this isn't like a "wtf this came out of NOWHERE" kind of thing

You sent your children to school and left for work. You got to the lab a little late, and you were greeted with a still-steaming cup of coffee sitting on your desk with a note from your intern.

Good morning sir!! I hope I made it right =owo=

-Alphys

You sighed and looked around, but she was nowhere to be found. Probably off in her lab, elbow-deep in a project. You made a mental note to thank her later, but as you grabbed the cup in a mug that read “World’s Best Dad” you were really only thinking about Frisk.

You made your way down to the lower lab, but the elevator seemed to take an eternity to reach the Human Research facility. You stepped out of it and took another sip of your coffee- it was far too bitter, but Alphys tried her best, and you truly appreciated that.

You entered the room with the human’s cell and set your coffee down on the desk.

You heard a faint noise from inside and moved over to inspect it. Frisk was curled up in the awfully stiff-looking cot with their back against the wall. They had the blanket you’d given them wrapped around themself like a cape.

“Frisk? Are you alright?” you asked quietly, and when you spoke the human jumped and pressed themself further into the wall. You saw their dull red eyes wet with tears and were immediately on edge. You used your magic to conjure an opening and stepped inside, hands raised.

“Frisk?” you ventured when they didn’t look at you. Their eyes remained down on the cot and you saw how big they were- and how terrified they looked. They pulled the blanket tighter to themself and you noticed that the air felt… charged.

“Frisk, I won’t hurt you, but I’m going to come closer. Okay?” you

asked, and their eyes flitted to you for a moment before they shut them tight and gritted their teeth.

There was magic in the air, and it was not your own. You were a little taken aback, because it was very potent and strong magic, but it seemed almost aimless. You looked at Frisk. Humans weren't supposed to have magic… were they?

Frisk gasped and hissed as the magic sparked and they braced themself against the wall.

"Human, are you using magic?" you asked a little too quietly. The words just seemed to upset them more. They pressed closer and you noticed how oddly… bumpy the blanket looked.

"Frisk, I'm going to come closer. You aren't in trouble, and I won't hurt you."

They didn't respond with anything more than a sharp breath and tears.

You got closer, very aware that the magic in the room was heavy and so much more powerful than your own. Humans didn't usually have magic- you'd heard that, long ago, the ones who did were revered as Mages and Wizards, and they were the ones who placed the spell to seal the monsters. But to your understanding, it was a small, small portion of humanity that could use any magic at all. Certainly none of the previous six had any.

You sat on the edge of the bed and waited until Frisk opened their eyes to look at you. They looked like they were in pain- you couldn't see anything aside from their face, though, because of the blanket.

"Frisk, I have to take the blanket away- you're hurting."

They let out a little breathy sob, and it hurt your heart, but you gently reached forward and pried the fabric away from them. They fought for a moment.

"It's alright, Frisk. Shh, it's alright."

They allowed you to take the blanket from them and you were met with quite a peculiar sight.

You were *certain* that humans weren't supposed to have wings. And you knew they definitely hadn't been there the day before.

They were the same color as Frisk's hair, but they were ragged and the feathers were sparse and unkempt. You knew as much about feathers as you did about hair, but you knew wings weren't supposed to be so rough and patchy. You only caught sight of the tail that was curled around their body a moment later- it made sense, biologically, you thought. Flying monsters typically needed some form of rudder for proper flight.

You were a bit captivated for a moment, caught up in the idea that this human could shapeshift. You didn't notice the way Frisk trembled with an entirely new kind of fear until they began to hyperventilate.

You put a hand on their shoulder, carefully minding their new appendages. "Frisk, it's alright. Please, deep breaths, try to calm down. Magic is entirely normal for monsters."

They sucked in a breath and met your eyes for a second. You gave their shoulder a gentle rub and held their gaze.

"Shapeshifting is uncommon, but not unheard of. It often happens when monsters go through maturation- when more magic becomes available to them, their bodies adapt and take on the changes. I didn't know that humans could go through a similar process, but I assure you, it will be alright. Just try to relax."

That seemed to calm them a little. Their breaths became less shallow and ragged as they looked at your for any sign you were lying to them, or going to attack, or worse. You withdrew your hand but remained where you were, close by and trying to ignore how strong this human's magic was.

"Has this happened before?" you asked.

Frisk looked away for a few moments. You noticed that they did not move their wings- they didn't look to be very comfortably held, either. Still, Frisk gave a small nod.

"Does this happen often?" you asked, keeping your voice soft.

Frisk gave another teary nod. You watched them, shushing them quietly and cooing reassurances like you would to your own children. Eventually their body relaxed and the magic in the air slowly dissipated.

It was very odd and unsettling to watch as their wings and tail seemed to almost dissolve into raw magic- similar to a monster turning to

dust. However it appeared that Frisk's body absorbed the energy, because it left no trace or residue of the limbs ever having existed at all.

You wrapped the blanket around them again, and they seemed very relieved to be able to clutch it to them and hide their face in its folds.

You watched with a growing pity in your chest. This poor creature seemed afraid of everything. You wished you could hold them and tell them that everything would be alright, but…

"I spoke to the King last night, about what should be done. He is coming in a few hours to gauge the situation, but I believe he will allow me to prolong your stay here and treat your injuries."

They looked at you from beneath their blanket.

"He is a very kind King- and I will be present the entire time. I am sure he will understand the situation."

Frisk sniffled. You offered your hand, and after a long pause they took it gently in theirs.

"You're safe, Frisk. I promise."

Another little sob was muffled by the blanket. They drew their hand away slowly before holding out the opposite one with their injured wrist.

"Ah, how does it feel?" you asked as you took it, looking it over. It had healed more than you'd anticipated, but if the human possessed such powerful magic, that was hardly surprising. You allowed them to pull their hand away, mopping up some tears, and they signed.

"Okay."

"That's good. After Asgore visits, I'll administer more magic, but yours seems to be doing quite well on its own. It will heal much faster than anticipated."

"Okay."

You gave them a patient smile, but they had their mouth hidden and you knew they likely wouldn't return it. How long had it been since they'd smiled? Laughed?

"If you would allow me to, and the King permits it, I can help you

train your magic. It can be painful when it gets out of control like it did, but with a little bit of work you should be able to harness it much better, and that will decrease the pain. Trying to hold excess magic back is always painful- next time, try to relax, alright Frisk? I understand that you are scared, but I don't want to see you hurting."

Frisk looked away. Why was this human so scared of their magic? You stood again.

"I will be at my desk, but I'm going to leave the door open, okay? If you need anything, please don't hesitate to let me know."

Another small nod. You went back to your coffee, giving them the space they probably longed for.

Magic was not supposed to be so painful. You'd never seen a monster in so much discomfort from their own magic- perhaps a little twinge when it became particularly strong, or minor cramps, but Frisk had looked to be in awful pain.

As much as you didn't like the idea, you assumed they'd been taught to be ashamed of their magic, just as they were ashamed and frightened of most everything else. You would look up at them once in awhile to see them still pressed to the corner- they watched you with sharp eyes. Were you imagining that they seemed to become less distrusting with each passing hour? You hoped not.

The more you learned about Frisk, the more pity welled up in your chest, and the more you wanted to help them.

You planned to meet Asgore at the entrance of the lab. You'd found Alphys on your way back up and had thanked her for the coffee, but your mind was soon overwhelmed with thoughts of Frisk.

"Dr. Gaster? You seem a little d-distracted," Alphys said as she wiped the grease off of her scaled claws. She'd been working on a robot of some kind, which was not unusual in the least.

You sighed. "I know- sorry, Dr. Alphys. I have a lot going on at the moment."

"Is it the human?" she asked.

You blinked and looked at her, because she wasn't supposed to know

about that and your immediate thought was that you must've let it slip, but realization flashed on her face and her cheeks flushed.

"I-I mean- what? W-what human? I-I don't know anything about a human!"

"Alphys…"

"I saw them on the cameras," she admitted, kicking her foot. "D-Don't worry, though! I haven't told anybody."

You let out a breath, but had to smile at the young scientist. "It's alright, I suppose… you haven't been down there, have you?"

"N-No! It'd take way too long to hack that security system. I-I am a little curious about the human, though, sir… what have you been doing with them?" Alphys asked. Her eyes were big as she adjusted her glasses and looked up at you.

"At this stage, mostly just rehabilitating them and treating their injuries. They are very unwell."

"Oh no! Poor thing," Alphys said. "They were so tiny on the camera…"

"They appear to be small for their age, likely because of improper nutrients and care while growing," you said quietly.

"I wish w-we didn't have to kill humans…" Alphys said a little sadly. "They're just a k-kid…"

"Asgore is supposed to be here quite soon," you said. Your gut was twisting. "We can discuss this more later, Dr. Alphys. I'd suggest not letting him know you're aware of the human- he may get upset with your snooping."

Alphys blushed and gave a sheepish little smile. "O-Okay, you're probably right, s-sir. I'll go back to my lab! Good luck!"

You waved to Alphys as she hurried off, back to her work.

Her comment was still heavy in the air. You wished you didn't have to kill the human, too.

Asgore arrived a little late, but you had waited for him in the main

lab. You greeted the tall monster with a quiet hello, and Asgore seemed to pick up on this immediately.

“Perhaps we should go down to the lab before discussing anything,” Asgore suggested. You nodded.

The elevator ride was silent. You were still very much worried about the human, and what you’d discovered, but you didn’t know how Asgore would react. He looked… hollow, somehow.

You guided him to the facility and into the room with Frisk’s cell. You’d closed the door, knowing that Asgore might not appreciate it if you allowed the human to roam free.

“Asgore, I’m afraid something else has… come up. The human can use magic,” you said quietly.

Asgore’s eyes widened as he looked at you, but he shut them quickly.

“They are indeed a strange child, then.”

You heard the muffled sob coming from the cell as the King spoke. You walked over, careful not to move too quickly, and saw Frisk still curled in their corner with the blanket drawn around them.

“Frisk, you said?” Asgore said as he came to stand beside you and gaze in at the human. You felt your soul churn. It was like the child was an animal on display.

“Yes, sire. I don’t know everything yet, but they seem capable of shapeshifting.”

“Ah… some humans have the ability to use magic, as you probably know,” Asgore said, but his voice was dull. “Before the war, many humans who were capable of using magic lived amongst monsters. When the war began, the other humans feared those with magic would side with us. They killed their own kind to ensure that didn’t happen.”

You listened to his words and realized suddenly how old Asgore truly was. It had been centuries since they’d been sealed- so long that Gaster had grown up and accepted that he would never see the stars. Yet it occurred to him that Asgore had once seen them, had grown up with them.

Frisk let out another breathy sob as Asgore spoke. You wished you

could erase the haunted look from his eyes- how great a weight it must be to be the King. To have to kill children.

“Gaster, could you go and get the files for the second human, please?” Asgore asked. His voice was lifeless.

“O-Of course, your highness, I will be right back,” you said. You gave Frisk one last look before you hurried from the room. The office was right across the hall- you’d organized all of the files, so it only took a moment for you to locate everything you had on the second fallen human.

You looked to the security camera and saw that Asgore was entering Frisk’s cell. You froze as you watched him conjure his trident.

You realized that he had said to change protocol. Not delay it.

You dropped the papers and ran.

You made it back to the room to see him raising the weapon. Frisk sat on the bed with death in their eyes.

“No!” you screamed, and before you had time to consider what you were doing you’d flung your magic at the King. His soul turned blue and his movements stopped. You cleared the entire front wall of the cell and let the ragged breaths come as Asgore’s gravity weighed him down and the trident fell from his paws and clattered to the floor.

You’d just disobeyed and attacked the King.

You sent away your magic at once, but one look at the human made your soul pulse in horrific pain. You ran to them and without a second thought you scooped them up and held them close in your arms.

“Sir, please- I’m sorry- do not kill them-”

Asgore stared at you as you held the shocked and motionless child. You met his eyes with panic still flashing in yours. Adrenaline pulsed in your bones as you held the human flush against you.

For a few moments, there was silence, save for your shallow breaths. Asgore’s eyes were wide but not a single light glowed in them. You held the human.

They began to sob. You felt their hands wrap around your body and the child clung to you and pressed their face into your lab coat. The

horrible noise seemed to draw Asgore from his stupor. The trident vanished and he was left gaping at you.

“Please, Asgore- this child has suffered enough- they are kind. Sir- I beg you- let them live. This is a-an anomaly, sire, I… I…” you stopped and tightened your grip on the human. “I’m sorry.”

“Stand aside, my friend,” Asgore breathed. You had to shut your eyes as he watched you.

“Asgore- sir- please-”

“This is the seventh soul, Dr. Gaster. This human will free the monsters.”

“They’re only a child- sir, they’re only a child,” you said. You felt tears well in your eyes as you disobeyed your King and your friend. “Please, Asgore- they have been wronged as we have. They don’t deserve this- please. *Please.”*

Asgore was silent. You held the child in primal fear and tried to plead with your eyes- you couldn’t allow him to do this.

There was a silent challenge. You might have backed down if not for the shivering human that cried in your arms, but as they whimpered, you were once more reminded of your own children. Would Asgore so willingly kill them, if they were human? You stared at him as the defiance settled inside of you.

“I will not let you kill them,” you said. You’d meant it to be threatening. It sounded more like begging.

Without much warning, Asgore’s eyes filled with dark emotion, and he turned away from you.

“They are your responsibility. If they hurt anybody, they will die, and you will face the consequences.”

Just like that, he was gone.

Chapter 6

Chapter Notes

> It's been a while but here you go, out of the lab and into the lair of the baby bones

See the end of the chapter for more notes

You sat there for a long time after that. Frisk did not loosen their hold on you, and you did not protest one bit. It was scary to realize how much you wanted to protect this child that you barely knew, but they were safe so long as they were in your arms. If you'd stood up to Asgore, you could stand up to anybody.

They cried, but you shushed them once the shock of the situation had worn off and rubbed little circles into their back, soft and gentle and minding the half-healed scars. No child, not even a human child, deserved to die like they almost had. You would never forget the look on their face as they stared down the length of Asgore's weapon.

When they'd quieted and gently untangled their limbs from you, you allowed them to go without a fight. Frisk's body still shook, and you were still so sorry for them, but when they moved away they stayed close to you.

"I'm so sorry," you said quietly. The air was heavy with emotion. "I didn't know he would… do what he did." You didn't want to say it out loud.

Frisk sniffled. You frowned and wrapped an arm around them, and they went rigid for a moment. They looked up at your face before they relaxed and leaned into your side.

You had to think. You wished deeply that the situation could have been different- that Asgore would have allowed Frisk to find a home and somebody who knew how to care for them. They were hurt, more than just physically, and you feared that you could not provide what they needed. But… anything was better than being dead. You were glad that they were so quiet- it gave you plenty of time to think about what had to be done.

You were deep in thought, but not too deep to miss the way Frisk curled themself against you. Even if it had taken a near-death experience, you were glad that they could at least be at ease in your

presence.

“Frisk,” you said as you took them by the shoulders and very softly moved them to face you. Their red eyes were scared, but you kept your hands gentle.

“I wish the circumstances were different, and that I could offer you more, but… I do not want to risk your safety by bringing more people into this. It isn’t much, and I can’t promise it ever will be, but it seems that our only option is for you to come and stay in my home.”

Frisk stared. They blinked in confusion.

“I wish I could give you something more, but you will be safe. Until something more permanent can be figured out, you may have to travel with me to work. Are you alright with this, Frisk? You can stay here in the lab if you wish, but I would feel much better if you came home with me. But the decision is yours. Do you want to?”

They blinked up at you. Their face, thin and worn but still with a child-like youth to it, was twisted in a mix of confusion, disbelief, and shock. After a moment, they raised their hands

“Okay” they signed slowly.

You smiled a bit, but everything had happened so suddenly and you would have to figure out just what to do with Frisk. Even if it was for a good cause and you didn’t mind, taking in a third child would not be easy. They would need clothes, and somewhere to sleep, and things of their own. And your own children- you loved them both so much, perhaps too much for your own good, but how would they react to Frisk? More importantly, how would Frisk handle them?

You looked at the human child. You were not afraid of them hurting you or your children, but their magic was unstable and there was much work to be done in that regard. What would they eat? Could humans live on monster food? What about their hygiene? Skeletons were very much so different than humans.

“We will figure this out,” you said mostly to yourself.

Frisk nodded.

You allowed Frisk to take the throw with them, and they kept it

wrapped around them like a little cape. It was cute, but that was greatly mitigated by the circumstances. They did not let go of your hand as you gathered a few papers and a bag and led them to the elevator. You couldn't let them stay in the lab, not after what had happened.

You and the human made your way home, slowly and uncertainly. Your mind was swirling with doubts. Was it a good idea to take the human to your house? What if Sans and Papyrus overwhelmed them? They stayed close to your side and didn't let go of your hand the entire trek back. You took a more scenic route to avoid other monsters, and you found them staring at the looming ceiling of the cave and the distant walls. How strange it must have been, to see rock and lava where before there had been open skies and trees.

Rushing into things was almost never the best option. Careful deliberation was required to make the right choice, you knew that. You'd taken your time and had made sure everything was perfect when your own children had been created. There was no room for error or doubt.

But, back then, you'd had a lot of time to sit and think about what you truly wanted. You talked to Asgore at length, asked for people's opinions, did your research. You looked down to see the small human with their hand in yours, and you realized that you'd been acting on instinct alone.

You realized that you didn't really care.

You couldn't even comprehend the horrors they'd been through. To be lashed- to be so fearful of everything and everybody- you were grateful that you would never truly understand, but your ignorance only made Frisk's abuse seem all the more awful. You would not have been able to live with yourself if you'd allowed Asgore to kill the child. Their eyes were so haunted, but with time you hoped they could look like a child's eyes should.

When your journey through hotland was finally over, you stood on the porch of your little home on the outskirts of New Home and unlocked the front door. You had an hour before the boys got home from school. You'd do your planning in that time.

"Well, Frisk, this is my house," you said as you opened the door and led them inside. They were hesitant and slow to follow, but when you flicked on the light and they took in their surroundings, they seemed

to be put at ease.

Your home was, in a word, cozy. You liked it that way, with big, soft furniture and not a lot of excess. The main living area led off into a hall that contained three bedrooms, one for you, one for your boys, and a third that was functioning as an office area of sorts. It wasn't a big house, but it wasn't cramped, and you liked it just fine.

You stood back and watched as Frisk looked around. They let go of your hand after glancing for approval and moved over to put a hand on the couch. Their eyes were big and wide.

"It isn't much, I'm afraid, but you'll be safe. I have no idea how long this will take to get sorted out, either, but… would you like to stay here, instead of in the lab?"

Frisk looked at you, so vulnerable in the middle of the living room. They nodded, small and uncertain.

"I will need to get some things in order for you, and I'll try to do it as soon a possible. This is all very sudden, I'm afraid I was not expecting to take on another child."

Frisk winced and their eyes told a very sad story, so apologetic and guilty.

Your instinct as a father moved you over to them, where you knelt down and very gently put a hand on their shoulder.

"I do not mind, Frisk, truly. I didn't mean it to sound so accusatory…"

They lifted their hands.

"Sorry."

Your heart twisted. "It's alright. As soon as we've got the basics handled, I can teach you proper sign language. Reading and writing, too. We'll figure everything out."

Frisk was staring at the floor and refused to meet your eyes. You gave their shoulder a gentle squeeze before you stood up again and offered your hand.

"I can show you around. My sons will be home from school in about an hour, but I promise, they are both very kind, and I will be

sure to talk to them beforehand."

Frisk nodded.

Despite their inherent sadness, they seemed captivated by the different rooms of the house. You took them to your bedroom first, pointing out the framed pictures beside your bed and the crudely made macaroni portrait on the wall. They stared, eyes curious, but they never smiled.

The boy's room seemed to pique their interest more. Papyrus's toys were still scattered about from the day before, and although he'd moved away from action figures and dolls and such, his remote controlled car caught Frisk's eye.

"Ah, that is Papyrus's," you said as you walked over and picked up the little convertible. You switched it on and plucked the remote from your son's nightstand and handed it to Frisk. "You can play with it, if you'd like to."

They looked at you with wary eyes, seemingly unsure if the offer was genuine.

You gave them a soft smile. "He won't mind, Papyrus loves sharing his toys. It's safe." To demonstrate, you moved the joysticks around and got the vehicle to move forward on the floor. Frisk watched in quiet fascination. When you handed the controller to them again, they took it and began to experimentally mess with the car.

"My intern, Dr. Alphys, she built it for him. She's very skilled at engineering and robotics, despite her age. When you're ready, I'm sure she'd loved to meet you."

Frisk nodded. They seemed to be enjoying the car, as much as their haunted face could show, but after a few moments they handed the controls back to you and shuffled their feet.

"Once you've settled in, I'm sure Papyrus would love to show you his other things. He is excitable and a bit too energetic for his own good, but he's very kind." You paused for a moment before you moved your hands and signed the letter 'P' followed by the sign for skeleton. "That is how we sign his name, he is too young to know much, but basic sign language is taught in elementary schools."

Frisk repeated the motions uncertainly, and you gave them a nod of confirmation. They seemed to think this over as they plucked at the

sleeve of their too-big shirt. They pointed to the second bed after a moment.

"My other son's name is Sans-" you signed an 'S' and then skeleton. "He is very laid-back and more mature than Papyrus is, but they are twins by human standards. From what I understand, most humans mature in a rather linear fashion, correct?"

Frisk had already repeated the sign for 'Sans' before they nodded.

"Monsters mature at much different rates, and in many different ways. Sans and Papyrus are the same age, but Sans is more intellectually developed, while Papyrus is more task-oriented and responsible. How old are you, Frisk?"

They held up all ten fingers, paused, and then another one.

"Eleven?"

Frisk nodded. You smiled and went to sit on the edge of Papyrus's bed. You patted the seat beside you, and although there was still doubt in their eyes, Frisk slowly came over and sat close by.

"I'll explain to them why you're here, and if you don't wish to meet them today, you do not have to. I will be there the entire time. I won't let anything happen like it did in the lab."

Frisk nodded again.

As hard as it was, you were getting used to their fear. Your heart still ached at the thought of your children scaring anybody, but you put a hand on Frisk's arm. They were safe. That's all the mattered.

"Dad! We're home!"

You were sitting in the living room with Frisk when you heard the door open and Papyrus's excited shout ring through the house. Frisk looked up at you, fear flashing in their eyes, but you put a reassuring hand on their shoulder before you stood and went to the kitchen.

Papyrus's little boney body collided with yours as he came hurdling around the corner, but he just huffed and picked himself up and hugged your legs, pressing his face momentarily into your abdomen. Sans was walking behind him with his school bag still on his back,

and he gave you a tired smile.

“Hi!” Papyrus greeted with a toothy grin. “The door wasn’t locked so that meant you were home.”

“Hi, dad,” Sans said as he walked towards the living room to put his bag in his bedroom, like he always did.

“Ah, Sans-” you said, and he stopped immediately and looked at you. Papyrus was still standing close beside you.

“Yeah?”

“I need to talk to you two about something, before you put your bags away.”

“I knew it! I knew you would forget to buy Sans a pizza-” Papyrus began, but you held up your hands.

“I’m afraid this is a little more serious.”

“Oh…” Papyrus said, deflated. “So… did you get the pizza?”

Sans had moved back over, sharp eyes watching you like a hawk, but at the second mention of the pizza he gave his brother an affectionate slap on the shoulder.

“Pap, I don’t think it’s about the pizza.”

You guided the two over to the kitchen table, where they sat with nervous looks. Papyrus swung his feet from the chair while Sans looked down at the floor.

“Are we in trouble?” Sans asked.

“No, it’s nothing like that....” you said as you folded your hands on the table and sighed. You could try to make the conversation a little lighter, perhaps avoid the subject for a bit, but… you decided against it. “You know what humans are, correct?”

“Yeah, they’re big and strong and scary and they trapped us underground,” Papyrus said. Sans nodded in confirmation.

“Well… yes, that is partly true. A long time ago, it was the humans who sealed us underground. However, not all humans are cruel like those ones were. Some humans are very kind, just like monsters.”

“Why’re you talkin’ about humans?” Sans asked.

“Don’t they all live on the surface?” Papyrus added.

“Yes, they do. However, sometimes a human will fall underground by accident, where they’re very lost and confused. Usually it’s children that fall.”

“Oh! Well, I bet the kids aren’t scary,” Papyrus said. His bright little sockets narrowed in thought. “But… Mindy’s scary, and she’s a kid…”

“Mindy’s just a big doo-doo head,” Sans said with a huff, and before Papyrus could protest his brother mocking the most well-known school bully, you held up your hands to reign them both in.

“You’re right, Papyrus. The children can be kind and caring. Some can even use magic, just like monsters.”

“Where’re you goin with this, dad?” Sans asked. His bright eyes, although tired from his day at school, were so observant and keen. Sometimes you wished he was not so clever. You decided not to beat around the bush.

“Yesterday, a human child was brought to the lab. They are scared and wounded, and it is my job to take care of them.”

“No way!” Papyrus said, eyes lighting up. “You met a human?! What’s their name?”

“Their name is Frisk. However, there were… some problems.”

“What happened?” Sans asked.

“They can no longer stay in the lab. Until I can figure something out, they’re going to be staying with us.”

“A *human?* ” Papyrus all but shouted, slapping his hands to his face in a way that was slightly comical.

“Yes. A human.”

“When are they coming?” he went on, jumping to his feet. “Are they here now? I want to say hi! And show them my race car-!”

You reached over and put a hand on his shoulder. Your face must have said enough, because his grin faltered and he sat back down. Sans’s excited look faded, too.

“In time, I’m sure they would love that, Papyrus. But I need you boys to understand that they are scared and nervous. They were treated very, very poorly on the surface.”

“Why?” Sans was the one to break the short silence.

You sighed. “Frisk can use magic, and the bad humans treated them differently because of it.”

“But- magic is good!” Papyrus interjected.

“You’re right. For us, magic is second nature, but for humans… most do not have any magic. They are afraid of things they do not understand. It’s the reason they banished us here in the first place.”

“Is the human okay?” Papyrus asked, genuine worry in his voice. Your heart swelled with pride for him, and Sans, too, because he looked just as concerned.

“They will be. They are hurt and scared, and I need you two to be on your best behavior with them, okay? No roughhousing or shouting, give them space and time. I trust you both to be kind to them, and I promise, they are not a danger to any of us.”

Sans and Papyrus looked at you for a moment, and then at each other, and then back to you. Their little faces were filled with resolve.

“We’ll be good,” the shorter said, slinging an arm around Papyrus’s shoulder. “When aren’t we?”

“You broke the lamp playing with your blue magic the other day- and you just called Mindy a doo-doo head-” Papyrus began, but Sans slapped his hand over his brother’s mouth.

You let out a breath and smiled at them. “Thank you. I know this is all very sudden… I’m very proud of you both.”

After you explained to them that Frisk could not talk or control their magic well, and they gave another determined nod, you led them to the living room.

“Frisk?” you asked, both of your sons standing close beside you. You heard them move on the couch, and there was a moment's pause, but then slid off of it and stood before the three of you.

For a second, you felt both of them tense, and you couldn’t blame

them. Even now, Frisk looked pitiful. They kept their head down and eyes averted, only peeking up through their messy hair for a moment to see the two new monsters standing there. They held the hem of their shirt and looked away again. You cleared your throat a little.

"Boys, this is Frisk. Why don't you introduce yourselves?"

Frisk looked scared, and you wished that you could make this easier for them, but you knew it wouldn't help. There was a short pause before Sans took a step forward.

"I'm Sans," he said, and slowly walked over. You watched as Frisk flinched away, but Sans was shorter than they were and they held firm. Sans held out his hand.

You waited. Frisk looked at you, as though for permission. You gave a nod.

They took his hand for a moment, hesitant, like they might hurt him, and then backed away.

"I'm Papyrus!" the other child piped up, voice wavering a little, and he moved over to them and held out his hand as well. "Dad says you're gonna live with us- that's pretty cool!"

Frisk looked between the two for a moment, then up at you. You could hardly imagine how horribly somebody had to be treated to be afraid of your children, but you saw it in their eyes.

"Dad told us that the humans up there weren't very nice to you," Papyrus said quietly, and Frisk's attention was immediately drawn to him. "But… you don't have to worry about that here! Everybody's really nice and dad is the best- me and Sans are great, too! I've got tons of toys that you can play with, and brother has video games… it'll be fun!"

Frisk stared at him for a bit. He reached forward and took their hand again and gave them a big smile.

"Yeah," Sans added a little less emphatically, but still with a smile. "Dad tells good jokes, too."

Frisk seemed at a loss. After a second, Papyrus let go of their hand, and they drew it back to them.

You were about to say something, but Frisk nodded and lifted their

hands.

“Okay.”

“Cool! Do you want to come see our bedroom? I’ve got a super cool race car bed and a pet rock- Sans has a telescope! We can use it tonight!”

“Okay.”

Papyrus beamed up at them. He hopped in place before he grabbed Sans’s hand and tugged his brother towards their room.

“Come on, Sans! We’ve got to clean up first- you left your socks on the floor and I didn’t put my toys away!”

Sans groaned but didn’t fight it as Papyrus pulled him off to their room.

“Give us a second, human! Everything’s gotta be perfect- Dad, make them some tea!”

“Papyrus, you don’t even know if they like tea…” you said, but he was already running down the hall with Sans in tow, a ‘nyeh’ drifting back out while Sans laughed.

“Are you alright?” You asked. Frisk was staring off in the direction the boys had gone. They visibly started when you spoke, but nodded.

“Would you like some tea?”

Frisk nodded again.

Chapter End Notes

By the way!! Mindy the doo-doo head is a reference to a WONDERFUL ask blog that you should all check out and follow, askgasterfamily on tumblr. They're wonderful... angst, fluff, baby bones, the works.

(Mindy won't actually probably appear in the story I just wanted to call somebody a doo-doo head)

Chapter 7

Chapter Notes

> Hello all you wonderful people... sorry for being gone so long, school wasn't throwing me a 'bone' haha (i'm so sorry) so I didn't have a lot of time or energy to write, but here's a chapter of this nonsense! It isn't much, but my last day is June 1st, and I don't have a single thing to do over the summer. So I'll be writing the whole time, once I graduate.
>
> Anyways, sorry for the wait, here's a lil chapter for you!

You tucked Sans and Papyrus in after you read them a story and they said goodnight to Frisk. The human was quiet and listened intently to everything you or your boys said, but they were still so on edge. The night had passed by uneventfully, and as the boys drifted off you were once again left alone with Frisk.

“You can sleep in my bed, if you’d like to,” you offered gently as the two of you sat at the table. Frisk always seemed to be pressing in on themself, as though trying to take up as little space as possible.

They turned their red eyes to you but seemed at a loss for what to say. They blushed and looked aside before they hesitantly pointed in your direction.

“You’d like to sleep with me?” you asked. The request was unexpected, but certainly not unwelcome.

Frisk flinched like you’d be upset with them for suggesting it. They hugged themself and glanced up at you with those sad, tired eyes. They were too young to look so damn old.

“I think that’s a good idea,” you said, and gave them the most genuine smile you could muster. “My bed is certainly big enough for two.”

“Okay.”

“We’ll work on figuring out some of the more complex details tomorrow. We’ll need to go and get some clothes for you at some point, and I’ll have to figure out the best way to go about teaching you sign language…” you trailed off. They seemed a little overwhelmed,

so you held up your hands. “I’m sorry, I’m just thinking out loud. You don’t have to worry, this will all sort itself out. Until then, my main concern is your health and recovery.”

Frisk gave a shy little nod before yawning. They stifled it, but you could only imagine how tired they must have been.

Even with you in the bed beside them, they fell asleep almost immediately upon hitting the mattress. You looked down at their tiny frame and battered body for a moment before you threw a blanket over them and gently patted their hair.

You were in far too deep.

You woke to the sound of quiet sniffles. You cracked open your eyes and listened, still groggy. For a moment you thought of Papyrus, who sometimes had nightmares and came to your room for comfort, but the door was still shut and the quiet noises came from one of the dark corners.

You stirred and the sobs were cut off at once. The bed beside you was empty, and the blanket you’d given Frisk was nowhere to be seen. You rubbed the sleep from your sockets and eased yourself out of bed.

“Frisk?” you called, careful to keep your voice soft.

They sniffled. You looked to the corner where your dresser stood and found a bit of blanket peeking out from inside of the small gap between the piece of furniture and the wall.

You were still a little out of it from sleep, but you made your way over and crouched down beside the space. Frisk stared out at you, but most of their face was hidden by the fabric.

“Are you alright?” you asked, offering a hand. They hunched in on themself and didn’t answer, but after a moment they put their hand in yours.

You helped them out of the corner and they wiped the tears from their poor little face.

“Sorry,” they signed.

“It’s alright,” you said. Your rubbed their shoulder a bit before

withdrawing. You didn't want to break the small bridge of trust you'd established between the two of you. "Did you have a nightmare?"

Frisk nodded. Although the room was dark, you saw them shaking.

"I understand, Frisk. But it's over now- bad dreams are just bad dreams. You're safe." You gave them a reassuring smile just like you would to your boys when they had a nightmare.

Frisk trembled. Your poor soul couldn't take much more of this.

"Would you like some hot chocolate? That always cheers Papyrus up when he has bad dreams."

A nod. You took their hand and led them to the kitchen, flicking on some of the lights as you went.

"If you have nightmares again, you can wake me," you said to them as you sat them down at the table and fixed the blanket over their hunched shoulders. "I don't mind."

You turned to go about making them something to drink when their hand caught in your pajamas. It disappeared as soon as it had come, and when you turned they flinched away, ready to be hit, as though their action had warranted violence.

You stared at them for a moment, so very out of your league. They moved their hands anxiously and bit their lip. You'd need to consult with somebody who knew more about trauma, and how to deal with a child like Frisk. You crouched down to be on eye level with them and laid a hand on their knee.

"Frisk, I know you are scared, and you have every right to be. But… I will not hurt you. Please don't think I would. If you need something, just try your best to tell me what it is."

You brushed away the remainder of their tears. Their hand hesitantly found its way to your shirt. They scooted off of the chair and wrapped their thin little arms around your chest, burying their face in your ribs. It couldn't have been comfortable, but you hugged them back.

"Shh… I've got you," you said, holding them close. "I know how nice it feels to have somebody close, especially when you're hurting. Hugs will always be free." You pulled them away and gave them a small smile. "Papyrus is a great fan of them. I'm sure he'd give you

one anytime you want.” you ruffled their hair. “You’re not alone anymore, Frisk.”

You reiterated the embrace. They hugged you back twice as hard.

It lasted for a little more than a minute before they pulled away and shuffled their feet.

“Would you like to help make the hot chocolate?”

They nodded.

The following morning went by without a hitch. Sans and Papyrus left for school, and as predicted, Papyrus gave Frisk and yourself a hug before hurrying out the door with his still-half-asleep brother on his heels.

“Bye Dad! Bye Frisk!” he shouted, and you waved as he ran down the street. Sans trudged along, but he turned back to the two of you and gave a tired smile.

Frisk did not protest getting up with you. As much as you would have liked to let them rest and recuperate properly, you weren’t comfortable leaving them home alone, and you weren’t sure you should risk taking a day off work after what had happened with Asgore. So, you got Frisk ready to leave for work with you as best as you could. They wolfed down a granola bar and a half and you wondered if monster food was sustaining enough for humans.

You found them some of Sans’s clothes that looked like they would fit. He liked to sleep in just T-shirts that were a couple sizes too large, and you pulled one of those out for the human to wear. It fit pretty well, but neither skeleton would have pants that fit. The boys were rather thin and boney. Even in their baggy pants, Frisk looked a little less pathetic with a black shirt that read “bad to the bone” across the chest. Luckily they had small feet and could fit into Papyrus’s boots. You felt bad for not being able to accommodate them more, but they seemed humbled by the effort, thanking you after every little gesture and following every one of your requests to a T.

You taught them a few more signs, including your name and as much of the alphabet as they were comfortable learning. They’d known how to spell their own name, but their knowledge stopped there.

It was two hours after the boys had left that you departed for the lab.Frisk followed on your heels, and when you passed by a monster they'd grab onto your lab coat and hide behind you. Some strange looks were given, but nobody questioned your little human. It wouldn't be long until word got around about a human living in the underground, but you hoped that the public would be alright with it. They did not harbor quite the same hatred for them, nor the need to kill. Monsters were not violent by nature. You hoped and prayed that they would accept Frisk.

You made it to the lab without incident, but upon entering you were assaulted by a familiar yellow lizard.

"You've got the human!" she blurted almost as soon as you stepped foot into the building. Frisk cowered behind you, and you kept a reassuring hand on their shoulder. Your fears of overwhelming them came back, but Alphys took in the fearful child and backed away.

"Oh, I-I'm sorry, sir, and human, but I saw you on the cameras and-sir! The human isn't supposed to leave the lab! R-Right?" she squeaked.

You looked around, afraid of a scene, but the other employees had already gone to their offices or begun their work.

"There's been… a bit of a problem," you explained. "The human has proven to be a bit of an anomaly, and they will remain in my care."

"Y-You mean… you don't have to k-" Alphys stopped and bit down on the word, casting a worried eye to Frisk. "You don't have to hurt them?"

"No. They'll be living with me."

"Oh, sir!" Alphys said, rushing forward and grabbing your hands. "That's wonderful! Killing humans is… it's not right, I-I don't think, especially innocent ones like… Frisk, right?" Alphys asked.

You nodded.

"If you n-need anything, or any help, you can count on me, sir," Alphys said, standing up a little taller. "I know you've a-already got a handful with the twins, a-and I studied humans- so I know a little bit about them. Did you know that they usually have to use something called a bathroom? Their food isn't efficient like ours so their body

creates waste from the unused parts, which they have to dispel somehow, but when they o-only eat monter food that stops happening since our food is made of magic like we are and-"

Alphys cut herself off when she realized that she'd been speaking far too fast and for far too long. She held up her jittery hands.

"S-Sorry, I got carried away, uhm… but, I really do think it's good that you decided to let the human live with you. I've got some old clothes that would probably fit them- well, all the pants have a tail-hole, but the shirts would probably fit alright. Maybe. Probably."

You stared at her as she watched the ground, deep in thought. You coughed to bring her out of her stupor, and she jumped.

"That… that would be very helpful, Alphys," you said, and you meant it. Frisk peeked out from behind you and looked at the assistant. "You're sure it wouldn't be too much trouble?"

"Of course not!" Alphys said, fixing her glasses and shuffling her feet. "I'd love to help out, s-sir."

You smiled. Frisk never moved from your side, but they weren't so tense. "Perhaps you could come to my office when you're done with work, and we could figure something out. I'm afraid I'm out of my depth when it comes to caring for a human…"

"Sure! A-Absolutely, sir," Alphys said. Her eyes were bright behind her glasses, and she looked warmly at the human.

"Please, try to keep this… confidential. It will inevitably get out, but…"

"Y-Yes sir!" Alphys said with a determined look in her eyes. "My lips are sealed. I-I should go, but I'll come find you later! Goodbye, sir! Bye, Frisk!"

Just like that, she was off. You sighed. She reminded you of Papyrus, in a way, so very passionate about everything, but you were glad to have her. You watched her tail swing around a corner as she disappeared. Up until that point, you'd been operating under the assumption you'd be working alone. The prospect of having another to help you was an enormous relief.

"Come, Frisk, I'll show you to my office," you said. They looked up at you. The growing trust in their eyes warmed your heart, but it was

still so small and fragile.

They pointed shyly to the elevator and gave you a worried look. You understood right away.

“No, no, you won’t go back down there. Not after… not after what happened. The main lab is nice and comfortable, I promise. You can stay in my office with me while I work.”

They seemed relieved. With luck, today would go smoothly, and after work you could get Frisk settled in.

Chapter 8

Chapter Notes

> more exposition... i finished my last final today, though, so hopefully updates will be more frequent again! once again, Mindy is a reference to the amazing blog "askgasterfamily" which you should DEFINITELY check out. its got a wonderful story and the person who runs it is so incredibly nice

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Humans a-are equipped to deal with the surface, so their bodies are m-more hardy and physical.”

“Made mostly of water,” you said, and Alphys nodded. You sat in your office with Alphys beside you. She’d brought a book with her, basic human behavior and biology. She pointed to a picture of a child.

“Their bodies aren’t regulated by magic, but… Frisk has magic, right?”

You looked to Frisk, who was sitting in a chair in the corner, watching the both of you from a safe distance.

“Yes, they do.”

“Well, that m-makes things a bit more complicated… but, the basic functions should be the same! You won’t have to worry about a human bathroom, since they’ll only be eating monster food down here, but they need cleaned and cared for like any other monster. Female humans have a menstruation cycle, which is pretty neat, e-even if it’s a little gross… uhm… it’s the shredding of the internal lining of an organ! But it’s bloody and kind of painful. Only female humans have one, because o-only female humans can carry children.”

You didn’t miss the way Frisk pressed themself back against the chair and refused to meet your eyes. It wasn’t uncommon for a monster to use gender neutral pronouns, as some monsters had one or many different genders, but as far as you knew, that wasn’t the case for humans.

“How often does that happen?” you asked.

“O-Oh, well, it only happens once a human starts sexually maturing. Which, for f-females, it could be anywhere from nine to thirteen. It

happens once a month until all of their eggs have been disposed of, and then it stops." Alphys clicked her claws against the table. "It's a lot different from monsters, but it isn't very complicated. Human biology is very straightforward, sir."

"Frisk?" you called, and the child jumped in their chair. They were tense as they stood and very hesitantly walked over to you, hands tight against their body and eyes down.

Alphys gave you a worried look. It was so obvious that Frisk wasn't normal, and that hurt to realize.

You turned so you were facing them, and they shrunk away with a frown. You wanted to ask them about their gender, but you saw the way they hugged themself and you knew it was a sore subject.

"If you don't wish to talk about this, you don't have to," you said gently. "But, why don't you come and sit with us? Dr. Alphys doesn't bite, I promise."

"I r-really don't!" she added as she adjusted her wide glasses and smiled at Frisk. It was clear that she was forcing herself to be happy and bright about the subject, but her morbid curiosity was easy to spot.

It took a bit of coaxing, but Frisk brought their chair closer to the desk you sat at and positioned themself to they could see the book.

Alphys stared at them for a moment with sad eyes, but she wiped it away and went back to her book.

"A-Anyways! So, humans are weird, and having magic makes them even weirder, but Frisk'll b-be fine down here. There aren't a lot of monster i-illnesses that humans can catch, and there's nothing to carry viruses down here. Plus, m-monster food is magic, and since Frisk is also magic, i-it's probably better for them than human food would be. And, since they're healing so well, they'll be better in no time!"

"That is good to hear," you said. Frisk looked at the ground, their feet not quite touching. When Sans and Papyrus sat in the seats, they'd always swing their feet. Even Alphys at times gave in. But Frisk kept their legs still, just like the rest of their body, as though it was a punishable offense.

"You can keep the book, just i-in case," Alphys said, and she closed the cover and smiled at you. "I can s-stop by tonight and give you

some shirts, and some more resources. You could t-talk to the school and see if you could borrow a s-sign language book."

Frisk shrank away, and you winced. Alphys seemed to realize she'd made a mistake, and her eyes went wide and she withdrew.

"O-Oh, uhm, I'm sorry if I said s-something-"

"It's alright, Alphys," you said, but Frisk had pulled their legs up into the chair with them. "Frisk cannot read."

"Oh… oh," Alphys said. She frowned. "I'm sorry, Frisk. B-But, I'm sure you'll learn super fast! Dr. Gaster is a very good teacher, he taught me a lot of what I know." The melancholy lizard gave you a big smile.

You blushed, and Alphys laughed. She looked at Frisk and pointed a claw at you.

"He's a big pushover, i-if you haven't noticed," she said. You watched as Frisk looked from you to Alphys before they gave a tiny nod. Alphys's smile faltered for a moment, so you picked up the slack.

"That only leaves the subject of Asgore," you said. If you could have, you would have kept Frisk from being present for this conversation. The flash of fear in their eyes was enough of a reminder of what they'd been through, but you couldn't keep things from them. They were hardly a child, with a timid intelligence behind their eyes that was far older than they were. Frisk gave you a worried look.

"What about him?"

"He has threatened to revert back to the original plan if Frisk causes any trouble. While I don't believe they would intentionally do so, until their magic is more stable, I can't guarantee that accidents won't happen."

Alphys paled. You hadn't had the time to tell her about what happened between yourself and the King, and it was obvious that she had assumed it had went much smoother than it had. Frisk put their head in their knees and their mop of brown hair hid their face.

"D-Did… he try to…?"

"Yes. It was never his intent to let the human live. I had to stop him myself."

Alphys didn't say anything for a moment. She shifted her glasses on her face for a moment before taking them off and wiping them on her labcoat. She stared into them for a second before replacing them.

"I'll talk t-to him. He isn't upset w-with me, maybe I can convince him that F-Frisk isn't a threat. I-It's only logical that letting them live is the best option- humans don't live nearly as long as monsters do, even magic humans, s-so nobody would really suffer if we let Frisk live here u-until they die of natural causes. I-I'll try to talk some sense i-into him."

"That may not be a bad idea, Dr. Alphys," you said thoughtfully. "I don't want to leave this up to chance."

"I'll go tomorrow," she said, and looked at Frisk. "You d-don't have to worry, Frisk, everything will be fine. You're safe with us."

Alphys gave them a reassuring smile. You were very grateful for her support. Frisk was still nervous, but you hoped that with time they'd relax.

The day passed by with little incident. Frisk sat with you in your office, quiet and unobtrusive, so very unlike your own children were when they came to work with you. At times you forgot they were even there. They hid under your desk when you weren't sitting at it, and even though it wasn't healthy, you wouldn't disturb their small sense of safety.

A few people stopped by and asked about the human. When you explained the circumstances, most of the employees were sympathetic and understanding. A few seemed concerned, but upon seeing Frisk those concerns vanished. It only took a glance to realize that the child wasn't a threat to anybody.

They seemed more at ease at your house. You let them take a proper bath and brushed their hair, and even if it took almost a half an hour to get all the tangles out, they seemed happy to have it manageable again. They still held their wrist in a tender way, but it was healing incredibly well. By the time the boys got home from school, Frisk looked almost like a normal human child.

"Daaaad, we're home!" Papyrus shouted, and you heard the door shut a moment later. You sat at the kitchen table with Frisk, going through the alphabet with them. Papyrus scampered in a moment later and

tackle-hugged you like he always did.

“How was school?” you asked as Sans followed into the room.

Papyrus frowned and Sans face immediately fell.

“Mindy called Papyrus stupid,” Sans said with an angry huff.

“N-No, she didn’t! She just… she said it, and she said my name in the same sentence,” Papyrus argued. The truth was obvious in the way he looked at the ground.

“She did so! I was there!”

“She didn’t mean it!” Papyrus said.

Frisk shrank away from the angry voices. You shushed them both, and they realized after a second that they were scaring Frisk. Sans turned away, still obviously upset, but Papyrus began worrying.

“I know she didn’t mean it… she just… she didn’t think before she said it, I bet! She probably meant to say… uhm… stupendous!”

You patted his shoulder. Papyrus hugged himself and looked up at you with big, hopeful eyes.

“Right, dad?”

“Papyrus, even if she did mean it, it isn’t true,” you said softly. “It’s possible that she feels that way about herself, and she’s projecting it onto others to make herself feel better.”

“She’s a *doo-doo head* ,” Sans mumbled. “If she makes fun of Papyrus again I’ll-”

“Now, now, there’s no need for violence,” you said, and clacked your head against your son’s. Frisk was watching you with wide, nervous eyes. They seemed to realize nobody was angry with them, so you repeated the gesture with Papyrus and gave them both a smile. Papyrus looked over at Frisk and stepped forward and offered them his arms.

“You get a hug, too, Frisk!” Papyrus said. The human paused, but without too much hesitation they hopped off of the chair and allowed Papyrus to wrap his skinny little arms around them. You hoped it was because they were comfortable with it, and not because they were scared to refuse.

“How was *your* day, dad and Frisk?” He asked, seemingly eager to change the subject.

“It went well,” you said. The taller skeleton looked hopefully at Frisk, who nodded.

“Okay.”

Papyrus grinned at you, and Sans waved to Frisk and gave them a big, earnest grin. All of a sudden, Papyrus slapped your leg and looked at you with stars in his eyes.

“Oh! Oh, dad, we should go get nice cream today! Frisk would love it!”

Sans eyes brightened at the mention of food.

“Alphys is stopping by later,” you said gently.

“Then she can come with us! Oh, oh please, dad, pleaaaaase, please please please-”

You laughed as Papyrus tugged on your sleeve and Sans turned his puppy-dog eyes to you. It only happened for a moment, and you nearly missed it, but when you looked to Frisk you saw a small, shy smile on their face.

Your heart skipped a beat. It was progress.

Chapter End Notes

> It should be noted that Frisk (in my fanfictions) is nonbinary and will only use they/them pronouns

Chapter 9

Chapter Notes

> bet you thought you'd seen the last of this
> this was sitting around mostly done for a while, sorry its p short, the story isn't gonna be super long... i'm gonna try to get it done, though, i hate leaving things half finished :^P

Frisk had another nightmare. You found them crying in the corner with the strange magic wings. When you offered the little human your hand, a moment of indecision crossed their face, but they took it and wrapped their arms around you like a child would for comfort. You wished you knew what the dreams were about, so you could reassure them, but you suspected that even if Frisk could talk about it, they wouldn't. You minded their patchy feathers as you held them tightly and led them back to the bed, where the two of you sat down together.

"It's alright," you said gently as you ran a hand over their head. "You're safe. Does it hurt?"

Frisk sniffled. They seemed scared, even more so than before. Something awful had happened to them for the child to know fear like they did. After a moment, they shifted their unused limbs and gave a little nod.

You waited for their shallow breathing to deepen before you stopped patting their head and instead moved so you were facing them a little more. Frisk's eyes were lowered as they hugged themself and shook.

"It isn't a permanent fix, I'm afraid, but when a monster's magic becomes too much, connecting it with another's will make the flow more stable. It should help with the pain."

Frisk flinched away from you. Their eyes went to your hands- you didn't move to close the gap they'd created.

"It's safe. You'd just have to hold my hands and try to relax. Papyrus has trouble managing his magic sometimes, and this always seems to work for him. If you don't want to, I understand."

Frisk eyed the floor for a little bit before they met your eyes for a quick second and raised their hands.

“Okay.”

“Thank you for trusting me, Frisk. I’m very proud of your progress so far,” you said, and gave them the softest smile you could. They stared at you like you’d slapped them across the face.

You waited for their eyes to fall before you held out your hands for them. Frisk looked at you, their tail twitched, and they put their hands in yours. It was evident by how they braced themself that they were expecting it to be painful. You gave their hands a little squeeze.

“It’s alright, Frisk, this won’t hurt. Take a few deep breaths and try to relax, okay?”

Frisk nodded. You didn’t have to tell them to summon their magic, because you could feel it burning in the air without prompt. You waited until their shivers had calmed before you allowed your own to come forth.

They gasped, but almost immediately the effects seemed to hit them and their eyes went wide. You looked at the dull red for a moment before closing your own and focusing on your magic. It didn’t have the potency or strength of Frisk’s, but it was an integrated part of your body, and so you could direct it at your will as well as the human’s.

“Your magic is a part of you,” you explained, remembering going through this with your boys when they were still young. “Don’t think of it as something else, think of it like an arm or a leg. Don’t try to control it, or defeat it, it’s an extension of you. Don’t try to fight it- that is when it will become painful. I understand that you’re scared of it, and that those on the surface didn’t tell you these things. But you’re safe here. I promise.”

Frisk remained silent, staring off into space. You could see your own purple magic in the air like vapor, and as it made its way to Frisk, it became deep maroon, and then rose, and then scarlet. You opened your eyes.The human seemed lost in the presence of another magic, and you assumed it was likely the first magic they’d ever encountered apart from their own.

“Does it hurt?” you asked.

Frisk didn’t seem to hear you at first. They shivered.

“Frisk?”

The child blinked and snapped out of it. Their hands were still in yours, wrapped around them and holding tightly. They shook their head.

“Are you ready to let go?”

They nodded.

When the contact was broken, your magic came back to you, and Frisk’s to them. They stared off into space as they hesitantly shuffled their wings, which seemed almost black in the dark room.

“Does that feel better?”

Another nod. You opened your mouth to speak, but Frisk’s wing was shaking as they slowly extended it away from their body.

You watched in quiet admiration. Monsters with wings hardly ever had ones as large as Frisk’s, because they used their magic to support them, instead of the wings themselves. But Frisk’s were easily as tall as they were, like a bird. They held the one away from their body, about halfway to being fully extended, and you smiled.

“They’re quite lovely, in all honesty,” you said. Frisk was staring at their wings, which were much less ruffled on the inner parts, but they looked away and blushed as you said it, pulling the appendage back to their side. Their tail, which had a fan of feathers on the end, curled around their leg.

“Do you want to try sending them away?” you asked. Frisk nodded and closed their eyes as you took their hands again.

“Just think about absorbing the magic, turning it to reusable energy. Don’t think of sending it away- think of bringing it back to you.”

Frisk nodded a few times and scrunched their face, deep in concentration. You eased a small bit of your own magic to aid the human’s and in only a minute or so, Frisk’s wings dissolved back into gently glowing magic that went right back to their body.

You let go of their hands and they immediately fell to the side. You caught them just before they could topple onto the floor.

“Frisk!” you gasped, lowering them to the ground. They were breathing hard, but they opened their eyes and looked at you. You frowned and leaned them up against the side of the bed, staying close

in case anything happened.

“Frisk- are you okay?”

They stared at their hands for a little bit. When they finally grabbed the hem of their shirt and held it tight, they looked up at you with tears in their eyes. You didn’t quite have time to get worked up before they unclenched their fists from their shirt and raised them.

“Thank you.”

You had to stop and hold your breath as a small, hesitant smile founds its way to their face. It vanished when you didn’t reply immediately, but you shook your head and moved forward to hug them.

“You’re very welcome, Frisk, don’t cry,” you said as you rubbed their back. “It’s alright.”

They nuzzled their head into you like it was the first physical contact they’d ever been able to trust. You held them as they began to sob. You wished they could talk, so they could tell you what was wrong, but you did what you could.

“Shh… it’s alright,” you cooed, like you would to your boys. “I’m here. I’ve got you.”

Frisk only sniffled.

Chapter 10

Chapter Notes

lookin at around 13 or 14 chapters i thinkkk

It took a couple of months for Frisk to stop flinching when Papyrus got excited and raised his voice. Their wrist healed without a problem, at which point you shifted your healing magic to their back. Even with the setbacks, they looked much, much healthier after eight weeks had gone by.

Asgore had yet to speak to you. Alphys reported that he didn't want to speak of it, and you were fine with that. Frisk came with you to the lab every morning, and they would sit quietly in your home in the evening, watching you or Sans or Papyrus with guarded interest. Your boys adjusted to having Frisk around quite wonderfully. They helped Frisk practice using their magic, and Sans even aided in their sign language. Papyrus was nothing if not a motivation, and you noticed immediately that Frisk was drawn to the children.

You sat at your kitchen table, the morning calm and peaceful. Sans and Papyrus were still asleep in their bedroom, and Frisk in theirs. Two weeks into their stay you'd furnished your office with things for them, including a bed, a dresser, and more clothes. You had to custom order a lot of the shirts, because it became apparent very quickly that Frisk had been heavily suppressing their. Once they relaxed, their wings remained materialized near constantly.

It was nearing eight by the time Frisk emerged from their nest of a bedroom. Their hair was rumpled and stuck up in the back, and you smiled as they rubbed the sleep from their eyes. After a haircut, you'd finally been able to spot their face amidst the brown mop.

"Good morning," you greeted, and Frisk gave you a quick nod before they hopped into the seat across from you at the four person table. You were glad that most tables came with an even number of seats, because you quite liked your table and would have been sad to see it go. Frisk was always up earlier than your sons. They weren't very expressive, you realized, even when they were at ease. Their face usually remained neutral, or a little sad.

"Morning," they signed as they yawned.

“Would you like something to eat?”

“Wait.”

You nodded. “Sans and Papyrus should be up soon, I can make all three of you something.” You took a big sip of coffee. “Did you sleep alright?”

Frisk nodded as they picked at their nails. They were still nervous, but they didn’t seem to be afraid, and that made you happy. Now they had clothes that fit, and they were clean, and their eyes didn’t look quite so haunted anymore.

“You could go back to sleep for a while, if you’d like,” you offered. “It’s still rather early. I’ll wake you up when breakfast is ready.”

“Couch?”

“You don’t need to ask permission to sleep on the couch,” you said softly. “Go ahead- I’ll get your blanket.”

They nodded, quick to make amends for their “mistake.” They stood again and picked their way over to the living room. You watched their fluffy back disappear around the corner. Their feathers were beginning to fill in, now that they were getting the proper care they deserved.

Their room was cluttered, but they kept it an organized disaster. Their bed was covered in blankets and other things they collected. It was amusing at first, considering the wings and how bird-like the behavior seemed, but it became apparent that they horded as they did in fear that what they had would be taken away. You were getting used to the sudden, stinging pain in your soul after realizing things like that.

You entered and picked up a half eaten granola bar from underneath their bed. You would have to have another talk with them about keeping food like that, but you hated drawing them out of their very limited comfort zone. So what if a few of your granola bars ended up stashed in Frisk’s room because they feared they wouldn’t see food again for days? You could afford more than enough snacks to accommodate Frisk’s unhealthy habits, at least for the time being. With time you hoped they would feel safe without stashing snacks in their room.

Frisk was already curled up on the couch, snuggled amidst the

fluffy cushions. As you came over with blanket in hand, their eyes rose to meet yours, and you gave them a small smile as you covered them up and patted their head.

Your coffee was cool enough to chug by the time you got back to it. You did so as you sat, wandering idly about possible plans for the day, before a half asleep Papyrus trotted out of his bedroom and down the hall.

"Good morning, sleepyhead," you greeted. Papyrus mumbled something as he fumbled about in the kitchen and, after a few minutes of barely conscious struggling, got himself a glass of water.

"Hi dad," he said before he knocked the cup back and took a big gulp.

"You're up awfully early."

"I had a bad dream," Papyrus admitted with a frown and a huff.

"What was it about?"

Papyrus pouted for a second. He put his head on the table and groaned. You had to hold back your smile, because he was always like this when things didn't quite work out as planned.

"Mmmm… it was about Mindy," he finally admitted. He puffed a little bit. "I don't wanna talk about it."

"That's fine, you don't have to," you said. "But if you have anymore, tell me, okay?"

"Okay," Papyrus relented. He sighed. "She can just be a real meanie sometimes."

"Have you told the teacher?"

"No! And I'm not going to! I can handle it, she just… she just needs to learn how to make friends the right way, that's all," he said with a forced smile.

"That's very kind of you, Papyrus. I'm glad you told me," you said, "that takes a lot of courage."

Papyrus brightened up immediately with the praise. "Yeah! You deserve to know, cause you're my dad! Frisk told me I should tell you, too."

You blinked. “When was this?”

“Two nights ago?” Papyrus said uncertainly. “Yeah, it was Thursday night. I heard them up so I went to their room and made sure they were okay!”

“That’s very sweet of you, Papyrus,” you said. “Is their sign language coming along that well?”

“Oh, I dunno, Sans is a lot better at that than I am,” Papyrus said, finally settling back into his normal Papyrus disposition. “They told me.”

Your hands shifted on your mug. “They… told you? They spoke?”

Papyrus nodded. “Yeah, they only started talking to me I think… uhm, a week ago?”

“That’s- that’s wonderful!” you said, trying and failing to keep your voice down. You’d had your suspicions but- after only two months- “Why didn’t you tell me sooner?”

It was Papyrus’s turn to be confused. “I thought you knew they could talk?”

“I knew they could to some extent, but they’ve never spoken to me before,” you said, a little giddy. “Has Frisk spoken to your brother as well?”

Papyrus was still obviously confused, but it was a happy sort of confusion. “Yeah! They’re really quiet, though.”

“That’s wonderful,” you said again, allowing your excitement to fade out. “I wasn’t sure they’d ever be comfortable speaking.”

Papyrus didn’t respond, but you were too busy with the pleasant hum of happiness to notice right away. You were staring down into your second cup of coffee when he spoke.

“Dad… what happened to Frisk? Why are they so scared?”

You looked up and saw Papyrus fidgeting with his hands, unwilling to meet your eyes. Before you could think of what to say, he went on.

“They’ve got a lot of scars… and they get scared when I shout too loud…” he said sadly. He lifted his gaze sheepishly to your own. “I think… I think Sans knows, at least he acts like he does, but… what

happened?”

You knew this question would come eventually, but that didn’t make the atmosphere any less melancholy. You sighed.

“I don’t know the specifics, Papyrus, but… they were very badly abused while on the surface.”

“Why?” he asked. “Why would anybody do that? They wouldn’t hurt anybody, and they’re really nice!”

“Humans fear things that they don’t understand,” you explained, but Papyrus only frowned. “It wasn’t their fault, but it happened, and we have to do our best to make them feel safe again. Do you think you can do that?”

“Of course!” he said as he sat up straight. “I’ll make sure they’re safer than they’ve ever been before! Nobody hurts my friends while Papyrus is around!”

You smiled.

Chapter 11

Chapter Notes

> my motivation and inspiration has been garbage lately, but here's this chapter! literally the only thing keepin me goin is feedback so if anybody is still reading this you know how to get more out of me now lol
>
> anyways enjoy!

It was late one thursday night. You didn't have work, but the boys still had school. You hardly ever treated yourself, but it'd been so long since you'd had any time to relax. Between the boys and their schoolwork, your job, and Frisk, things had been hectic the last six weeks. It didn't help that Papyrus was becoming exceedingly dejected because of Mindy. You were going to have a talk to his principle about it, regardless of what Papyrus insisted.

You sighed, pushing it from your mind. You leaned back on the couch and propped your legs up on the coffee table. Tonight was yours- you could stay up late and enjoy the horror movie you'd been meaning to watch for months now. The boys were too young for movies like this, but they were both tucked in and asleep.

Frisk was in their room. You weren't sure what they were doing, but you knew the movie wasn't suitable for them quite yet. You'd check on them halfway through. You let out a deep breath and snuggled into the couch, hot chocolate in hand.

Ten minutes in, you heard the pit-pat of footsteps coming your way. You suppressed the pang of disappointment, but paused the movie and waited for the child at large to come into view.

You leaned forward and turned and saw Frisk standing there, illuminated by the light from the kitchen. You could see them visibly shaking.

"Frisk? Are you alright?" you asked, adjusting your glasses to make sure you weren't mistaken. They hugged themself a little tighter and looked away for a moment before lowering their hands and answering.

"Busy?"

“No, no, I was just watching a movie,” you said. “Do you want to come sit with me?”

Frisk wiped the growing tears from their sockets and came over, blanket dragging behind them. They sat beside you on the couch, a few inches away. After a moment their resolution seemed to break and they leaned against your side.

“I’m here. What’s wrong?” you asked softly.

They didn’t do anything for a moment. They were shaking softly. You waited quietly, a hand on their back.

“Th...thank y-you…”

It was so quiet and unexpected that for a moment you didn’t realize it had come from the child. When you didn’t respond, they seemed to shrink in on themself. You pushed the surprise away and rubbed their back as gently as you could.

“For what?”

They shuddered and brought up their hands.

“Saving me,” they signed through the tremors.

“Oh, Frisk…” you drew them closer to you, turning slightly so you could speak to them more directly. “You don’t have to thank me… I only did what was right. And I’m so happy I did.”

They didn’t say anything in response. You stroked their hair and gave them a little kiss on the top of their head.

They fell asleep not long after. You’d forgotten about the movie, honestly. Your ribcage was filled with a bittersweet elation- they’d spoken. They’d spoken to you, and even if it had nearly driven them into a panic they had still done it. You kept a steadying arm around them even after they’d drifted off.

You cared so much for this little human.

“Dad, wake up!”

You cracked your eyes open and saw Papyrus, fully dressed and ready for school. Sans was right behind him.

“We’re going to school! We wanted to wake you up and say bye,” Pap explained. You looked down and saw Frisk still curled against your side. Sans smiled softly down at them as they stirred and woke.

“Mornin’ Frisk,” he said.

“M…” Frisk looked to you as though for permission. You gave them the most reassuring smile you could muster. They blushed and looked away. “...mornin,” they finished quietly.

Papyrus’s sockets lit up when they said it, and he swarmed in for a brief hug. Some little unspoken thing passed between the three of them.

“Well, we’re off to school now! Bye Dad, bye Frisk!” Papyrus chirped. Sans was dragged to the door, bookbag trailing on the floor behind him.

The door was slammed shut and you sighed, amused. Frisk untangled themself from their blanket and looked up at you curiously. It was such a refreshing sight- the fear was almost gone from their eyes now. You gave them a kiss on top of their head.

“Well, it’s just us for the day. Is there anything you’d like to do?”

Frisk shrugged. They brought of their hands. *“Choices?”*

You rubbed your chin thoughtfully. “Well… we could go get nice cream, or to see a movie, or just stay home and watch a movie here. Whatever you want to do.”

Frisk looked away for a moment as though thinking. They grabbed a gentle fistful of your shirt and hesitantly opened their mouth.

“A-A movie… would b-be g… good,” they said, voice so rough with disuse. They didn’t seem to trust it, and coughed once the phrase was out. You patted their head.

“I’ve got quite a few here- Sans and Papyrus both love movies, and Alphys likes to spoil them, so we’ve got a couple dozen. Do you want to look at the ones we have?”

Frisk nodded.

A day in watching movies sounded quite pleasant, if you were being honest. Frisk was calm and liked peace, just as you did. Papyrus

would often get bored watching a movie, so you'd usually have to pause halfway through to let him go do something else for a while.

You stood, taking Frisk's hand and leading them over to the cabinet where the movies were kept. They seemed quite impressed with the selection and took their time looking through. In the end they went with an animated movie, which was mostly what you owned. You loved animation- it was quite stunning what the humans had managed to accomplish with their storytelling media. Frisk picked one about owls and you settled them into the couch and went to make some hot cocoa for the two of you.

The day passed with movies and the occasional break for snacks and drinks. Frisk stayed curled against your side for the most part, blanket drawn up around them like it usually was. A few times you even heard a breathy noise that was almost laughter- it made your soul soar. Their smiles were rare and bright like sunshine. You periodically leaned down and kissed the top of their head like you would your own children, and they would look up at you with big eyes and an *almost* smile on their lips.

The third movie was almost over when the phone rang. Frisk jumped at the sudden noise and wordlessly pressed closer to you, but you gave their head a reassuring pat before standing up and moving over to your cell phone. Not many people called you on your days off, so you assumed it was something important.

You didn't recognize the number on the screen, but you picked up anyways.

"Hello, Dr. Gaster speaking," you said as you sat back down on the couch.

"Hello Doctor- it's Mrs. Marrso, the school principal. I hate to call you at this hour, but there's been… a situation here at the school involving your son Papyrus."

Your soul fell. She sounded calm, but you knew any call from the principle like that was going to be on account of something bad happening.

"I'll be right over," you said before saying a tense goodbye and hanging up. Frisk looked up at you with a silent question on their face.

"It was the principal of the boy's school," you explained. "I'm sorry-

they need me over there for some reason. Are you alright to come with me? I can call Alphys if not."

Frisk looked hesitant, but they shook their head.

"I'm okay. I'll come."

You patted their head again before you stood. You changed your clothes and took a few minutes to get yourself in presentable order. Frisk brushed their hair and teeth and pulled on a shirt. They looked nervously back at their wings, shuffling them a little, before looking up at you.

"Here- I'll help you put them away," you said patiently. Frisk looked relieved. You knelt down and held out your hands, and Frisk took them without pause.

There was a spark of purple magic, soon tinged red, and then Frisk's wings were gone. They gave you a tiny ghost of a smile as you wrapped them up in a poncho of Sans's.

"You're sure you're alright?" you asked as you secure it around the shoulders and remained kneeling there. "I can call Alphys if you'd like to stay in the lab."

Frisk shook their head. They looked nervous, but they raised their hands.

"I'm okay."

You ruffled their hair and stood, taking their hand in yours and leading them out of the door.

When you arrived at the Principle's office only twenty minutes later, you found Sans sitting there with his head down and Mrs. Marrso at her desk.. She was a koala-looking monster with white fur around her muzzle and soft eyes. She stood as you entered, eyes briefly flashing towards the human child that was still holding your hand.

"Thank you for coming, Dr. Gaster," she said. "I'm sorry to interrupt you at work."

You shook your head. Sans didn't raise his to look at you.

"It's no trouble, I had the day off, we were watching movies when you

called," you said. Frisk did their best to hide behind your leg, peeking out at the short furry monster behind the desk. "I thought you said Papyrus was the one in trouble?"

"Neither of your sons are in trouble, Doctor," she said solemnly. She took her seat again and motioned to the free chair. Her eyes flashed and she once again stood, walking to the corner and clearing off another chair that had been stacked with binders and gently walking over and placing it beside the other two. She had a hunch to her back and was clearly getting on in years, but she bent down regardless and held out her hand to Frisk.

"And you must be the little human I keep hearing about," she said. Frisk looked up at you in concern. You put a hand on their back in reassurance and they reached out to take Mrs. Marsso's hand for just a second before pulling away.

The principle seemed satisfied with that, but she still looked sad. She labored back around and once more sat in her desk chair. You took the bigger seat and Frisk jumped into the smaller one that sat closer to Sans. He still had his head down and wasn't looking at you.

"There was an incident at recess," she began, "between a handful of students and your sons. The teachers intervened before things could get any worse, but I'm afraid Papyrus was injured."

You gripped the arm of the chair tighter. "What?"

"It was nothing critical, just a small crack in his skull. The nurse is tending to him now, and the students responsible have been suspended. Neither of your sons are in trouble over the incident."

You looked at Sans and he further ducked his head and didn't meet your eyes.

"Why would they attack my sons? I'm aware of Papyrus's problem with a student named Mindy, but there have been no physical altercations-"

"It wasn't Mindy," the principle began. "I'm afraid the reasons for the attack were… hateful. In nature."

You stared at her, not comprehending. She sighed and took off her glasses to wipe at them, eyes gliding over Sans and eventually ending up at Frisk.

“Word has gotten out that you are caring for a human. Some backwards-minded monsters are not happy about that.”

You could visibly see Frisk tense beside you as the fear began radiating off of them in waves. You reached over and grabbed their hand to calm them, but you could feel the anger beginning to build.

“What?” you repeated with an edge to your voice.

“Sir- we understand your anger, and the problem is being dealt with. The students have been suspended for five days, and should they cause trouble upon returning they will be expelled.”

You gaped at her. Sans had hunched his shoulders where he sat. Frisk had begun to shake.

“We will be dealing with the problem from the source. I will be in contact with the offender’s parents and will tell them that this type of behavior is not tolerated in any degree. From what we understand, the King has given you his permission to care for the human child- is that correct?”

You flinched. “I… yes, it is.” Well, it wasn’t a lie. He had said you could keep the human so long as they didn’t hurt anybody, albeit in a very unfriendly manner.

Mrs. Marrso nodded. “Then there is nothing to worry about. We will deal with this problem and make sure nothing of this sort happens again here at school.”

As if on cue, there was a knock at the door. Frisk jumped five feet in the air before the door was opened and the nurse, a tall bunny monster, gently led Papyrus inside.

There was a bandage on the side of his head. As soon as he saw you, he bolted over and tackled you into a bear hug before you had the chance to stand up. You rubbed his back as he started crying. Somebody had hurt your son… because of Frisk. You glanced at the human and saw that their eyes had that hollow, empty look in them, like they’d had when they had first arrived underground.

“You may all go home, if you wish,” Mrs. Marrso said as she stood again. “Sans and Papyrus, should they choose, can stay home Monday and Tuesday as an excused vacation.”

You nodded. Mrs. Marrso spoke for another moment, asking if you

had any questions, making sure Papyrus was okay. He didn't say anything as the four of you stood and departed. You felt awful- your good day had been absolutely ruined by the events. Sans stayed close to the human, as though he was afraid somebody would try to hurt them. You could only imagine how awful Frisk must have felt. It hurt.

Frisk wouldn't even look at you.

Chapter 12

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Frisk refused to eat. You felt like your soul would shatter from the helplessness and pity- their sad eyes and defensive posture, even when the four of you had returned home. They wouldn't even interact with the kids.

"Are you sure it's alright?" you asked Papyrus as he sat at the kitchen table, fiddling with the bandage on his head.

"It's fine… It just itches a little," he said, more reserved than usual. "I wish I could scratch it."

"You have to leave the bandages on for another day- that's what the nurse said," Sans reminded. After the first few hours of sulky, crying children, they'd seemed to calm down. Sans still looked over at Frisk every few seconds, but when he looked back he had that sad look on his face that you felt in your ribcage.

The child just stared at the floor. You hadn't addressed the elephant in the room for fear of upsetting them, but you felt like the pressure was becoming unbearable.

"Frisk…"

"I can go."

You stared at them for another moment before you noticed they were crying. They still turned away as they signed.

"Can go… back to the lab, to Asgore-"

Sans was the one sitting closest to them, so he was the one who reached over and grabbed them close into a bear hug. You stood and hurried over and knelt beside them.

"No- absolutely not, Frisk, none of this is your fault. You're staying right here," you said with a hand on their shoulder. It hurt- it truly did.

"I-I… 'm sorry," they cried, and dear God it was painful. They sniffled

but hugged Sans tighter and buried their head into his shoulder. Your son looked at you with tears gathering in his own sockets. Papyrus, who stood nearby, seemed equally as disturbed as he rubbed his arm and sniffled.

“It isn’t your fault,” Sans said quietly into their hair. They hiccuped and grabbed him tighter.

Much of that evening was spent with the four of you on the couch, trying to calm down after the day’s events. Frisk ended up in your lap, grasping one of your hands like you’d leave them if they didn’t. You tried to play some music or a movie, but nobody seemed in the mood. To be honest, you weren’t either, but it was worth a shot if nothing else.

You couldn’t allow this to get worse. It was unlikely a monster would harm your children beyond a school bully throwing some rocks, but Frisk… they could hurt the human and you would not allow it.

You ran your thumb along the side of their tiny hand. Tomorrow you would go to Asgore. It had been long enough. You couldn’t afford to wait any longer.

Chapter End Notes

sorry for the short as hell chapter, the next one is coming soon~

you can come visit me on tumblr, see some dank memes and the occasional undertale related post

Chapter 13

Alphys arrived at your house just an hour after you called her. It was Sunday- Frisk wasn't eating or sleeping nearly as much as they should have been. They didn't talk to you, or your sons, and it hurt to see them relapse when they'd come so far.

You let the little lizard in with a heavy soul. She seemed equally as nervous.

"S-Sir- I know you probably have to do this b-but are you sure you don't want me to come with you?" she asked as soon as she was inside.

"If things go sour, I don't want you to be liable for any of the fallout," you said. "But… thank you, Alphys. I appreciate it."

She gave a solemn little nod. You led her into the living room where the three children were sitting on the couch. Papyrus perked up when he saw her.

"Al!" he greeted loudly, jumping up and giving her a hug.

"Hey Pap! Hope you're ready for some fun- I get to b-be your babysitter for a few hours."

"Really?" Sans asked, still seated next to the human. Frisk kept their eyes down.

"Where are you going?" Papyrus asked, looking up at you. You sighed.

"I'll be out running some errands. I should only be a few hours."

Frisk curled up into the arm of the couch. Alphys turned to you with a concerned frown on her face. You wished you didn't have to leave Frisk with somebody they weren't familiar with, but you didn't have much of a choice.

"Will you be home for dinner?" Papyrus asked.

"Hopefully," you said, and your frown lessened. "You three have fun- Alphys brought some movies, there's ice cream in the fridge."

“Ice cream!” Papyrus exclaimed with starry eyes. Sans smiled and nudged Frisk, who seemed to lighten up at least a little at the mention of dessert.

“If you need anything, just call me.” You tried to catch Frisk’s eye, but they brought their knees up and hid their face against them.

“We’ll be f-fine, sir,” Alphys said. “It’s only a few hours.”

You nodded, trying very hard to dispel the growing dread in your ribcage. You weren’t worried about your sons, but Frisk… what if they got upset while you were away? What if… you shook yourself. You had to do this- worrying about ‘what ifs’ wouldn’t help anything.

“Be good, you three,” you said, moving over and giving each of the children a small skeleton kiss on the head. Frisk only briefly lifted their head to allow it.

You frowned, even as you grabbed your coat and headed out. You were still frowning as you walked down the street.

You really didn’t want to do this.

The walk to the castle was just as long as it always was. You felt like each step you took along the scenic path was one step closer to your certain doom. Usually the vines and the homes on the small horizon would grab your attention and hold your fancy, but today you walked with dread in your gait.

The monsters you passed along the way greeted you with smiles and a wave, some even bowed. Some, however, only cast you dark glances before turning away. Somewhere deep down it stung, but you weren’t worried for yourself- even going to the castle wasn’t truly dangerous for you. But if you didn’t stand up for Frisk, who would?

The great golden hall was empty by the time you arrived. Your footsteps felt heavy and echoed far too loudly on the tile floor, but as much as you wanted to turn tail and run, you knew you had to confront the King.

He sat on his throne. You stood in the doorway, hand pressed to the frame of the massive door for support. The air felt cold. Asgore wasn’t

wearing his armor- he seemed deep in thought before you shuffled your feet and his head lifted to look at the intruder. As soon as his eyes fell on the skeleton, they went cold.

“Dr. Gaster,” he said flatly. He rose from his throne, all at once becoming much taller and more imposing than you.

“Sire,” you said quietly. “...May I enter?”

He bared his teeth for the shortest of moments before he turned his head away. “If you must.”

You stepped inside, the dying light of the hall setting a dark, foreboding atmosphere. Even the flowers in the garden couldn’t brighten it.

The King looked… unkempt. His beard was not as pristine as it usually was, and you couldn’t remember the last time you’d seen the King without at least some of his armor on- he wore khakis and a button-down shirt that was left untucked and wrinkled. You swallowed nervously as you approached.

“Asgore, I’m… I’m sorry, for attacking you in the lab-”

“I do not want apologies, Doctor,” The King said. “If that is all that has brought you here, I suggest you go.”

“No- no, it is not. I am here because of what happened to Papyrus.”

Asgore’s expression darkened. “What has that human done to-”

“Frisk hasn’t done anything,” you interjected, apprehensively adjusting your glasses. “Not… not directly. It’s about what happened at his school, your majesty.”

Asgore looked at you. “What are you talking about?”

You flinched away from the harsh tone, so unused to it coming from him, let alone being directed towards you. “I-I’m sorry, I assumed you would… somehow know. He was attacked by other monsters and injured.”

“Is he alright?” he asked. You supposed he *would* still like the children, despite his obvious hatred of you. It stung.

“He is fine, it was only a crack… but… the reason for the attack was… because of my housing of Frisk.”

“And why have you come to me about it?”

“He… I…” you took a step backwards. “My children are in danger, sire.”

Asgore took a step forward, towering over you. “They are in danger because of your disobedience. You put your children in danger to save a human.” Asgore's volume grew as he came closer until he was looming over you, as great an obstacle as the Barrier itself. His eyes were alight with something dark. “And soon you will lose *everything* because of your kindness- kindness has no place in a human’s heart- they will only *take* and *destroy* even without knowing it-” Asgore shouted as he raised one of his massive paws.

You fell backwards and brought your hands up to your face, shaking. Your soul was gripped by panic and fear.

You were ready for a blow, but nothing came. When you could bring yourself to lower your hands, you saw Asgore staring down at you with something akin to horror in his eyes.

“I… I am sorry- please-” you began, trying very hard to keep your voice steady but failing miserably. You hadn’t expected this, nor anything even close. Had he really raised his hand to attack?

Asgore was shaken from his trance by your words. He hissed and took a stumbling step back, leaning down onto the arm of his throne. He covered his eyes with his paw.

“I am sorry. I… forgive me, Wing Dings.”

You swallowed, willing yourself to get back to your feet, but you couldn’t. He… he had been ready to attack you- to physically harm you-

You didn’t notice him coming towards you again. Your eyes widened as you began to scramble away from him before you noticed his sad, sad eyes and outstretched paw.

“I am so sorry, my friend,” he croaked. You blinked up at him, scared, but reached out anyways. He lifted you gently to your feet.

Neither of you said anything for a moment. You thought about leaving- of going home and forgetting anything had ever happened- before Asgore cast you a hopeless glance.

“I’m sorry. I did not mean what I said.”

He sounded so dejected. You took a step forward out of instinct and put a hand on his massive back.

“I feel as though you were not talking to me,” you said. His whole body went stiff before he let out a pitiful noise of sadness.

“They were so young… they didn’t deserve what happened to them.”

You took your hand away. Your soul gave a soft beat when you realized who he was probably talking about.

Asgore turned back to you.

“Will you come have tea with me, doctor? I… I have a lot of things I have not been honest about.”

You nodded.

You wrapped your hands around your mug. Asgore’s home was cozy- it had always been cozy, but it also felt lifeless. He surely got lonely- living here alone where he used to have a wife and children. You could hardly fathom it.

The goat monster was still fiddling with his tea at the counter. You took a sip of yours- too sweet- and waited. There was a dismal atmosphere that was potent enough to make its way straight to your soul.

“I used to make tea every afternoon,” Asgore said softly. You weren’t sure if it was to himself or to you. “Chara and Asriel… were never big fans.” You could just make out the smile on his face from your angle. “They added so much sugar. I wonder if it even tasted like tea when those two were done with it.”

You let out a deep breath. “What were they like, sire?”

“Wonderful.” Asgore turned and trudged to the table, taking a heavy seat beside you. “Of course, Asriel was ours. He was so sweet, but so gullible. Chara once convinced him that tangerines were baby oranges…he wouldn’t eat them after that, saying it was cruel to kill them so young.” Asgore laughed, but it was hollow.

“I’m so sorry,” you said softly.

Asgore looked like he could start crying, but he blinked it away. His soft white face wasn’t suited for this sadness- it hurt you to see him so melancholy.

“I was wrong to do what I did,” Asgore said. “There is never an excuse to snuff out an innocent life.”

“Sir, I understand-”

“No, you do not,” Asgore said at once. “All of the humans before… the ones that fell… they were innocent and foolish, but they were whole. They thought we wouldn’t hurt them, but we did.” Asgore put his head down. “I did.”

You stared at him, your tea forgotten.

“Chara was the same as your human,” he said. He let out a rumbly, tired little laugh. “It was such a shock- we found out many months into their stay that they were capable of using magic. They were so on edge, it was hard to earn their trust. They were aggressive and defensive at first, very scared of us. It was Asriel that wore them down, I think.”

You sat. It was news to you that Asgore’s adopted child had been capable of magic, but you did not interrupt.

“They were so selfless. I wouldn’t call them kind, but… their soul was pure. They were… a good child…”

Asgore was crying. You reached a hand out and laid it on top of one of his.

“Oh, Wing Dings… I blamed *them* - for so long, I blamed Chara for what happened. It was never their fault, it was nobody’s fault- they were a *child* , and Asriel…”

You rubbed his hand, unsure of what to do. Your soul was aching.

“I was angry, and hurt, and my people needed something. I thought killing the humans was the right thing to do- but- those children… were no different from Chara- no more deserving of their fate-”

You felt entirely helpless. Asgore was hunched over the table, tears staining his fur. Tea forgotten, you moved closer to him.

“Sir… you did what you had to do.”

“I did what I *thought* I had to do. It’s why Toriel left- she was so appalled with me. I cannot blame her.”

You didn’t have anything to say. Asgore’s enormous frame shook for a while longer. You rubbed his back, as much as your comparatively small hands could, and waited. It took a while for him to compose himself. You didn’t mind.

“I’m sorry. The human… Frisk, correct?”

You nodded.

Asgore brought a hand to his face and wiped away the wetness. “They are welcome here. I will make it known that any harm to come to them is not only an attack on you, but to me as well. I’m not sure I can ever make it up to them, but they have my protection.”

You stared at him for a moment before a small, bittersweet happiness rose in your chest.

“Thank you, Asgore.”

The monster gave you the biggest smile he could muster. You were about to add more when you felt your phone vibrate in your pocket. You pulled it out and looked at the number.

“It’s Alphys… I’m sorry, sir, I should take this.”

Asgore nodded. You took a few steps away from the table, bringing the phone to your skull-

“G-G-Gaster- they took them- o-oh my god-”

Your soul lurched. “Slow down, Alphys- are you alright? Who did they take?"

“Th-the kids! A-A-All of them! They broke i-in and tied Frisk up- a-a-and S-Sans and Pap-Papyrus- and n-now they're- they're gone!"

Your soul froze over. Alphys was still wetly babbling into the phone.

Somebody had taken your children.

Chapter 14

Chapter Notes

> oh wow its almost been a year
>
> i know, i left it on a cliff hanger, i'm so sorry. things got hectic, i started new fics, and just recently i got a job.... but an anonymous soul was kind enough to sponsor AND beta the rest of this fic, so there'll be two more chapters after this! I made a post about general fic updates and what all got sponsored here so go check that out if you're interested!
>
> anyways... here's the climax!

By the time you arrived home, huffing and filled with terror, Alphys had brought the Royal Guard. The canines were swarming the house, every entrance, but you rushed by them and straight to the short lizard, who was still crying. Asgore followed behind you, a sweltering, angry presence about him.

“What happened? Who took them? Where are my boys-” you moaned, grabbing Alphys by the shoulders a little harder than intended.

“I-I-I’m sorry- I’m s-sorry- this is my f-fault, this is *all* m-my fault-”

“Please try to remain calm,” Asgore said, but his voice was low. You blinked back your own tears and removed your trembling hands from your colleague.

Taken- your children had been taken, kidnapped, right from their own homes. And Frisk- Frisk didn’t have the same protections Sans and Papyrus did. They were human- if they were killed-

“The bullies- at school-” you stuttered, spinning around to face the King. “It must have been their parents- we have to find them! We have to go at once-”

“Dr. Gaster,” Asgore said, resting a paw on your shoulder and stilling your shaking frame to a degree. His warm hand melted away some of your building horror. You stared up at his soft face and wiped away the tears as he continued: “we will find them. No monster would be cruel enough to hurt your boys.”

“But Frisk…” you whimpered, aware of how pathetic you were. It didn’t matter- your mind was running rampant with horrible possibilities, you couldn’t stop thinking about a poor, broken Frisk, never able to recover after this, constantly blaming themself, and *god* the boys, and Alphys- and-

“Sir!” A guard barked, breaking you from your anxious stupor. “We found the trail- they left from the back, in the direction of Waterfall.”

Asgore gave a tense nod. He was doing a remarkable job remaining composed, despite the situation, but his eyes were grave.

“Take the canine unit and follow the trail- I will make my way to Waterfall and search there. No harm is to come to the human.”

The dog bowed quickly before he scampered off, tail held rigid. If the Guards were feeling at all as you were, then they were horribly worried, tense, and angry beyond words.

Alphys had stood, sniffling, during the whole exchange. You regretted your earlier behavior and wrapped your arms around the little scientist, taking comfort in at least *one* of the people you cared about being safe and sound.

She hugged you back twice as hard. How scared she must have been, you thought.

“We must go. We might be able to cut them off before they reach the river, but we must hurry,” Asgore said. He patted Alphys on the head. “Stay here with the Guard, Dr. Alphys.”

“B-But-!”

“No buts,” Asgore cut her off. It would be humorous, a king talking to his employee like he would his child, but the situation wiped the humor away. “You are not as fast as Wing Dings and I. Stay and do what you can here.”

Alphys looked like she wanted to protest. You grabbed her hand and gave it a quick squeeze, overcome with emotions of all kinds.

You followed the King, praying to whatever god would listen that all three of your children were safe.

About halfway to Waterfall, a sparse trail of feathers began sprinkling the path. Your gut twisted, dread building.

“Easy, friend,” Asgore said as you bent and picked up a little feather. “It’s just down- they aren’t plucking Frisk.”

You shivered and hurried faster at the thought.

“This is all my fault,” you said, skull buzzing. “I should have kept them in the lab- away from other monsters. I could have brought the boys for visits, set them up in a spare room- it would have been safe.”

“The past is behind us,” Asgore said, walking a pace ahead. His long strides were hard to match, even at the near-jog you were trying to maintain. “What happened has happened, all we can do now is fix it.”

His presence and steady, deep voice were calming, but you couldn’t make yourself truly relax. More feathers dotted the trail, and your soul sunk further and further down.

“If anything happens to them, I’ll… I’ll…”

“They are fine,” Asgore said, an edge creeping into his voice. His massive frame stalked ahead. “I will not allow harm to come to another human as long as I live.”

You swallowed, remembering his past and the sorrows he’d gone through. He *had* lost his children- it wasn’t just a hypothetical. Your poor gut was going to wrench itself apart before the day was done.

That’s when Asgore halted in front of you. Soul churning, you hurried forward and stared at what had stopped him.

A few droplets of blood sprinkled the ground.

“O-Oh my god-” you began, the tears finally building in your eyes. “Frisk-”

“We must hurry,” he said darkly, his fur standing on end. You faintly heard him growl past the panicked beating of your soul.

“Frisk,” you whimpered, grabbing at your sweater. A stern paw guided you forward, bringing you from the pain.

“Later, friend. We have to go. Can you run?”

You blinked away the tears and nodded. They weren’t dead, there was

still time. You could save them. You *had* to save them.

It was hard to keep up with the king, but the adrenaline in your bones kept you moving far faster than you would have imagined possible. All manner of horrible possibilities were running through your mind, about what they'd done to the boys and where the blood had came from. Had they plucked a flight feather? Wounded the poor child? Pushed them too hard and cracked their skull on the stone floor? Each one made the dread more potent.

The two of you were just coming to the cave that separated Waterfall from Hotland when a handful of shadowy figures appeared along the trail. Your eyes widened just as another snarl escaped Asgore's maw.

"Stop at once!" he roared. The group whirled, but in the darkness you couldn't make out anything but their shapes. You glimpsed a winged silhouette and you gasped in relief- they were okay. Hurt, but okay.

You heard frantic babbling before the unmistakable voice of Papyrus split the damp air.

"Daddy!"

Your soul was going to burst. Before you could begin to comprehend that they were all safe, the boys were grabbed in shadowy hands and the group took off further into Waterfall. You heard Papyrus shout and scream.

The wings you'd seen flicked, and one of the culprits lashed out- Frisk fell to the ground. Their arms must have been tied- they hit it head-first.

It was enough for your panic and fear to turn into deep, passionate rage. That was your child- they were *hitting* your child.

"Stop! Get back here!" you shouted, breaking out into a sprint with Asgore right behind. Frisk was quickly flung over the biggest monster's shoulder as they ran ahead.

"Daddy! H-Help, D- mmn!" Papyrus was cut off abruptly. His voice was already distant, but now you couldn't hear it at all.

The chase didn't last long. They had children to carry, whereas you and the King were fueled by parental anger to rescue them. The ground flew by underfoot, the dark caverns of Waterfall opening up. You ran over the first bridge heedless of any loose planks, but upon

the second the culprits stopped. Poor Frisk was held by an arm and extended over the yawning chasm below and you stopped dead.

“One more step and I drop them,” the monster threatened. Up close you could see them- they looked like some kind of murky green reptile, with sharp teeth and white eyes. The others looked similar- a family, you assumed.

You’d never experienced pure, unadulterated rage before. Now you glared, magic sparking to life out of instinct, ready to shoot forward and catch the human should the disgusting monster follow through on their threat.

“What do you think you are doing?” Asgore called, loud enough for the rag-tag group of villains to hear. “That human is under my protection- you are directly violating an order from your king.”

“It’s a *human* ,” the monster hissed, the ones holding your boys struggling to keep them still. You only had eyes for Frisk, how they were looking at you. You’d seen that face before, and you remembered it far too well. It was the one they’d worn as Asgore was about to kill them.

“ *They* are human, and they are welcome here. Release them, now, or the consequences will be severe,” Asgore rumbled.

“They *killed* us!” another reptilian monster chimed in, one of the two holding Sans and Papyrus. “The humans murdered our families and sent us crawling underground like worms! And you want to harbor one?”

“This child has done no wrong,” Asgore tried to reason, but the monsters all hissed and shook their heads. Papyrus managed to get a hand free and reach out to Frisk, but he was quickly grabbed again. The hand over his mouth slipped in the process.

“Please, please don’t hurt them- please don’t-” he cried. “They’re scared! You’re hurting them!” Sans was beside him, struggling for all he was worth, his magic burning in the air.

“Shut up!” the biggest of them barked, shoving Papyrus back into another monster’s arms. They were in the middle of the bridge, while you and Asgore still stood on solid ground. They were too far away for your magic to reach. If they decided to drop Frisk-

“Where are you taking them?” Asgore questioned.

“Away,” one replied, tightening their hold on Sans. “And we’ll make sure they can’t hurt anybody ever again.”

“They’re innocent!” you finally managed to splutter, stepping forward. “They’ve done nothing wrong-”

“But they will!” came the fervent reply. Frisk was shaken over the chasm, their feet dangling. Without warning, they were thrown back onto the bridge, where they slammed into the wood far too harshly.

“Please-!” you cried, but the reptile was already on top of them.

“It’s a *human* , and this is what we do to the disgusting humans that trapped us down here,” they snarled, drawing back a claw.

“No!”

There was a bust of magic, and suddenly Sans was free. He had a wildfire burning in his eyes, one lit up blue and yellow. He ran at the monster just as the claw came down and nearly tore Frisk’s face open.

Your breath stopped in your throat. Your child caught the monster’s arm enough to divert the claw, which slashed down Frisk’s middle, taking the bindings with it. The reptile shoved Sans away-

Right onto the edge of the bridge.

You rushed forward, but it was far too late. Sans teetered for a moment as Asgore summoned his trident and ran at the band of reptiles before the child fell back, a look of horror on his face.

“Sans!” you screamed, nearly toppling over yourself. Too late- you were too late- he’d never survive the fall-

With their newly freed hands and wings, Frisk pushed themself over the edge. You watched as they opened their wings before both disappeared into the darkness below.

“No! Frisk- Brother-” Papyrus shrieked, the shock of the situation loosening the monster’s hold enough for him to break free. You reached out and desperately tried to grab Frisk and Sans with your magic, but they were falling too fast, too far.

No monster could survive that fall. No *human* could, either. The bombshell of a moment passed, and you were running for the other side of the bridge, desperate to find a way down. Asgore could deal

with the vile monsters.

“No no no, oh god, please,” you begged, forgetting about Papyrus for a moment, but he was quick to follow you despite his fast breaths and his tears.

“Brother, Frisk,” he echoed, repeating your terrors.

You went down the neglected path too fast, scraping your knees and your elbows, but you couldn’t afford to slow down. It was a steep, dark trail, and when you reached the bottom you ran to the middle of the expanse and saw a single black lump on the stone floor.

“Please- Sans, please,” you prayed, sprinting over and throwing yourself to your knees beside the lump. You expected blood and dust, but as you let your magic loose to light the darkness, your soul swelled with hope.

Alive- they were alive. Frisk had landed on their side, and there was blood and what you assumed was a broken wing, but clutched in their arms was Sans. Neither moved for a long moment. Papyrus came scurrying beside you and grabbed your arm, panting.

“Sans? Frisk?” you whispered, reaching out with a shaking hand and touching both on the heads.

Sans was the first to stir. He looked at you, blinked the fuzziness from his eyes, and then seemed to realize what had happened at the same time you noticed the crack on the side of his skull. You swallowed, but he saw you and immediately flung himself into your arms. You hugged him tight, crack or no crack, and smiled.

“Frisk… you saved him,” you wept, holding him as Papyrus let out a wail of relief and joined the pile.

Frisk didn’t move.

“Frisk?” you asked, moving away from the embrace to look at them there on the cold ground.

Still, no response. Your magic ran cold for a moment at the thought of the child dying to save your son, but then their eyes slowly opened.

“Oh god, Frisk,” you cried, putting a hand to their cheek, afraid to hug them because of their injury. “You’re okay.”

“S-Sans- Sans is okay?” they rasped, eyes going wide. The boy appeared beside you and wiped the tears from his sockets.

“I’m okay- you caught me.”

Everything had happened too fast. You could only breathe and let your soul calm, knowing they were all safe. Papyrus was a teary mess, barely able to suck in enough air as he babbled and cried. This whole thing was a mess, one that was going to leave scars for years to come, but in the moment you just stared down at the human and sniffled.

They were safe.

Chapter 15

Chapter Notes

> short chapter, sorry about that! next one HOPEFULLY to come soon, but i've got the sniffles... rip
>
> Here's February's Fic Update!

Asgore came down the path about ten minutes later to find you and your children still locked in an embrace. Frisk's wing needed attention, but you didn't want to risk any of the kidnappers hurting them further.

"Are they…?"

"We're okay. We're all fine," you breathed, looking up at him. "And the kidnappers?"

"The Royal Guard were right behind us- they're being taken into custody as we speak."

You let of relief. Frisk sniffled, and you were reminded of their injury.

"Sire- Frisk's wing is broken," you said, reaching out to wipe away the tears. "They caught Sans as he fell- his skull cracked-"

"Let's have a look- perhaps between the two of us, we can heal it."

You nodded. As Asgore approached, Frisk shied away. The enormous monster settled onto his knees close by.

"Do not be afraid, child- I know that I have wronged you in the past, but I swear to you and Dr. Gaster, I mean you no harm."

Frisk was shaking. They leaned into your embrace, shy and scared.

"It's alright, little one," you comforted, patting their hair. "I will never let anybody hurt you again."

They looked up into your sockets. You held their gaze for a moment before they nodded and wiped their tears, flinching as the movement jostled their injury.

Sans and Papyrus watched closeby as the two of you went about

healing their injury as best you could. It wasn't hard to pour your love into it- not after Frisk's fragile little light had almost been snuffed out.

You healed Sans quickly. His wound was largely superficial, which you were glad for. Frisk's, however, would likely take a number of weeks to completely heal. But you'd stopped the bleeding and would set the bone when you arrived home. It wasn't life threatening, and that's all you cared about.

The four of you were allowed to go home shortly after, accompanied by half a dozen members of the Royal Guard. Asgore himself dealt with the perpetrators- he was adamant that they received the punishment they deserved.

Alphys was where you'd left her, waiting on the front steps of your home with a canine guard, and upon seeing your children relatively unharmed, a look of near palpable relief overtook her. She rushed forward, playing with her hands, and quickly inspected you and the three young ones.

"O-O-Oh my gosh, you're o-okay," she stammered, tears welling in her eyes. "I was s-s-so worried!" She immediately left the doorway of your home and beckoned the group fo you inside, the guards staying put out front. "U-Uhm, come in! I m-mean, it's your house, so you do whatever you want to, but- uh- but come in!"

"Thank you, Alphys," you said, tired from the high-running emotions and the exertion of so much running. You were a scientist- not used to so much physical activity. The boys were huddled together against your leg, Frisk between them, but they gave Alphys tired smiles as you passed her.

You didn't even know what to do in this situation. Not doubt there would be questions- you could only imagine how scared and confused the children were. Frisk especially, you worried for. This would set them back weeks, maybe even months… but time healed nearly all wounds. You sat down on your sofa, followed closely by your children, and gathered all three up into your arms, mindful of Frisk's injury.

Maybe you should have talked to them, or said something inspiring and sweet, but as they warmed you, it was hard to keep your sockets open.

You deserved a nap. With Frisk and your boys snuggled in close, held safe in your arms, you allowed yourself that much.

Chapter 16

Chapter Notes

> almost done with this story, after like,,, 500 years. thanks again to the anonymous sponsor, it means the world <3 and thank you to all the readers for reading/commenting!! i love you all so much, never thought this story would get to 800 kudos! that's incredible! thank you all <3

Your home was dimly lit with the fleeting dawn light that filtered down to the underground. You held the untouched tea cup in your hand as you knocked gently on Frisk's bedroom door.

There was a soft noise from inside, which you took as a sign to enter. You found Frisk- now unofficially your third child- curled up against the headboard of their bed in the corner, blanket around them like a protective shroud. At first you thought you'd woken them, but when you caught sight of their face you knew they'd been awake for some time.

"May I come in?" you asked. The child needed to have agency in their life, which you tried to provide with small questions of permission such as this. When they nodded, you stepped inside and closed the door behind you.

A week had passed since the kidnapping. Things were beginning to settle: the children were starting to overcome the idea that they weren't safe, and the perpetrators were locked in the seldom-used dungeons of Asgore's castle for a lengthy sentence. Sans's crack had left his left eye a bit wonky, bright with magic when he tried to use it, but aside from that he was completely healed.

Frisk, on the other hand…

"How are you feeling this morning?" you asked as you took a seat on the edge of the mattress, holding out the tea for them. There was a moment's hesitation before they shifted, exposing the cast on their wing and the scared look that had sunk back into their eyes.

"Okay," they signed. They accepted the tea and took a drink, hands shaking.

"Another nightmare?"

They nodded between sips, eyes averted. You made a quiet, sad noise as you rubbed their back. They leaned into the touch and soon were against your side. You put an arm around their shoulder, mindful of their injury.

“Would you like to talk about it, or was it the same as the others?”

“S-Same,” they said weakly, hands preoccupied with the drink. Their voice was starting to become less foreign as the weeks passed, but its lack of strength never ceased to sadden you.

“I’m here. I won’t let anybody hurt you again,” you comforted tenderly. “I’ll treat your wound for today, alright?”

Another nod. You went to work pouring what energy you could into the wing, which was almost healed by that point. It only took a minute before you pulled away, taking the empty cup from their hands and giving them a big hug.

“Dad?”

You pulled away from Frisk as you heard the telltale clack of little feet outside of the door. You sighed.

“Come in, boys,” you called.

The door nudged open, and first Papyrus, and then Sans came through and joined the two of you on the mattress. They looked a little shaken.

“Nightmares?” you asked them. You got nods in response.

Nightmares were better than missing children. You hugged them all in turn, giving each a kiss on the head.

“Nightmares can’t hurt us- we’re all safe,” you said with a comforting smile. “But we’ve got a big day today. Let’s try to get a bit more sleep, my children.”

You all cuddled up on Frisk’s bed. Sans was under one arm, the human under the other, and Papyrus snuggled right up under your chin.

You couldn’t sleep yourself, but soon enough they were breathing deeply and dozing. It felt good to be close to them all.

“How’s that?”

Frisk shuffled around in their robes, rubbing the soft material of the sleeves. The clothes had been altered to accommodate Frisk’s wings.

The human seemed nervous to be around so many people. A dozen guard members were milling about Asgore’s castle to ensure no monsters got too rowdy as they were all called for the decree. The King himself was still preparing, no doubt unused to dressing in full royal garb. There hadn’t been cause for a meeting on this scale in many, many years. You yourself were wearing a robe emblazoned with the royal insignia.

“Dad, check out this rock!” Papyrus shouted as he and his brother bolted into the room. You smiled, happy to see Sans with some energy to spare for once. The guards let the little ones pass with a chuckle, a rather strange, pear-shaped rock clutched in Papyrus’s hand.

“I see it- it’s very cool, Papyrus.” You patted his head. Frisk smiled at his antics. The sight never got old. All of the children were dressed in royal clothes, although Sans’s were just a bit too large. He kept tripping on the hem of the garment.

“Can we get ice cream when this is over?” Sans asked as he grabbed fistfuls of his robes and moved them around to be more comfortable.

“I’m sure we can,” you agreed.

You would have continued the conversation, but just then Asgore’s imposing figure entered the room, fully clothed in one of his royal outfits. Deep purple hung from golden adornments, making him look like something from a high fantasy novel.

“Ice cream, I hear?” the tall goat monster said with a smile. Frisk hid behind your leg as he entered, peeking out at him while your boys, oblivious to what had happened in the lab, ran over and hugged him.

“Come with us!” Papyrus demanded, tugging on his violet robes.

Asgore looked to Frisk, who in turn hid themself away from his view, and he let out a sad sigh. “Ah, I’m sorry, children… perhaps next time. I have much to do here at the castle after a decree such as this.”

“Aww… okay,” Papyrus relented while his brother gave Asgore a tired, lazy grin.

A trumpet sounded, which meant it was time. You gathered all of your children to you, making sure their robes were in order and not caught on anything, while Asgore lead the way through the room and to the balcony that overlooked a large, crowded area full of monsters eagerly awaiting what they'd been summoned for.

"I will keep it short and simple, for the children's sake," Asgore whispered to you, a paw on your shoulder. You nodded, the opposite leg still hiding Frisk as they hid from the King.

It was strange to look down and see so many monsters there, waiting. A few clapped as Asgore's horns came into view, but mostly it was quiet. When he was in position, standing to address all of the Underground, you went to yours beside him, children following shyly.

"Monsterkind," Asgore began, a boom to his voice that carried across the throng. "I have summoned you here so that you may meet our new citizen of the Underground."

The monster milled about. You could just barely make out their faces, some intrigued, some confused, and some bored. Frisk was shaking, grabbing at your robes and hiding their face in them. You rested a hand on their back, between their wings, and tried to reassure them.

"Some of you may have heard of the arrest that took place last week," Asgore went on, "after our very own Royal Scientist's children were kidnapped. I make it known now, directly, that any harm to come to any child under my protection will be prosecuted to the fullest extent." Asgore's voice got very serious. "Violence amongst ourselves will not be tolerated so long as I am your King."

There was a general murmur from the crowd as they looked to Sans and Papyrus, who were staring at the ground. Asgore gave you a nod, which was your cue to pick Frisk up so that they may be seen. You hoisted the child up and held them against you.

You did so carefully, which they didn't protest. They wrapped their arms around your neck and held on tightly.

"Monsters of the Underground, it is my pleasure to introduce you to Dr. Wingdings Gaster's third, adoptive child- Frisk. The human."

The monsters below got a bit noisy, but a hand from Asgore was enough to settle them.

"Frisk is a mage- a human capable of magic. They have suffered at the

hands of humanity just as we have, because they are different. But here, Underground, I want them to feel nothing but love and acceptance. Should any harm come to them, the attacker will answer directly to me."

Frisk cuddled up closer, unused to the attention, and with a nod of permission from Asgore you sat them back down on their feet and quickly lead all three of your nervous children back through the curtain and away from the view of the people. Asgore's last words could still be heard.

"Thank you all for your time here today. Now you have all heard it, directly from your king: Frisk the human is one of us."

You patted them on the head while your boys hugged the child for all they were worth.

"Now it's official! You're our sibling!" Papyrus cheered, giving the human a skeleton kiss on the cheek. "Frisk Gaster!"

"Birds of a feather stick together," Sans added, which made Frisk… laugh. A small little giggle, but one of the most golden noises you'd ever heard.

You hoped they would continue to laugh for many, many years.

Chapter 17

Chapter Notes

> aaaand that's it! thank you all for reading, it's been a pleasure, to everybody who stuck around even though this story took so long- you're incredible, thank you so much <3

A year went by like minutes.

“Go, Frisk, go!” Papyrus cheered, jumping in place.

“You got this,” Sans added under his breath, hands curled in fists.

You watched, a hand on either of your boys shoulder’s and sweat beaded on your skull. You were more than a little nervous.

Frisk stood on the ramp you’d constructed for them in the lab, their wings partially outstretched. They were up a few feet in the air- enough to make you worry- and this was the first time they were attempting to fly.

“You’ve got to flap, Frisk!” you said as they eyed the downward slope. They looked regal, with their fully-healed and molted wings held aloft, but the question remained- could they fly?

You held your breath as they outstretched the appendages and gave a small, preparatory beat. They took a step towards the slope.

“You can do it, Frisk!” Papyrus continued to cheer, running over to the ramp and jumping. “I believe in you!”

That made the child smile. What a wonderful sight- even after so many months, seeing them carefree and happy made your spirits soar. The year that had passed truly felt like no time at all.

They beat their wings and started running down the ramp. You clapped your hands together as they rose- just a bit- their little feet coming off of the ground- before they touched back down a good ten feet away.

It wasn’t much, and it lasted only a second, but for just a moment they were airborne. Free.

“That was so cool! Frisk, you’re amazing!” Papyrus shouted, running

forward and throwing his arms around the child. “You’re a natural!”

“You beat the ‘flap’ outta that ramp,” Sans said, equally as excited in his own way as he hurried over and joined the two in the big, spacious area of the lab where Frisk had landed.

You jogged over and scooped all three of them up in an embrace. Frisk giggled a bit, face red and eyes joyful.

“That was wonderful, my child,” you said at once, patting their hair as you pulled away and looked them in the eye.

“I-I’ll say!” came Alphys’s voice as she hurried over from her desk, where she’d been observing quietly. She was nearly as excited as Papyrus. “You should b-be able to fly with no trouble at all, k-kiddo!”

Frisk beamed at her.

“A bit of practice and you’ll be flying all through the underground,” you said, hugging them close against your side once more.

Everybody was a happy, blubbering mess. Frisk’s ability to fly had been the hot topic for the last few months, and now they’d finally done it… the first step was hard, they’d backed down from that ramp so many times, but they’d done it.

You ruffled their hair. They looked up at you, smiling, the fear finally gone from their bright, shining eyes.

They were your child. And you were so proud of them.

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